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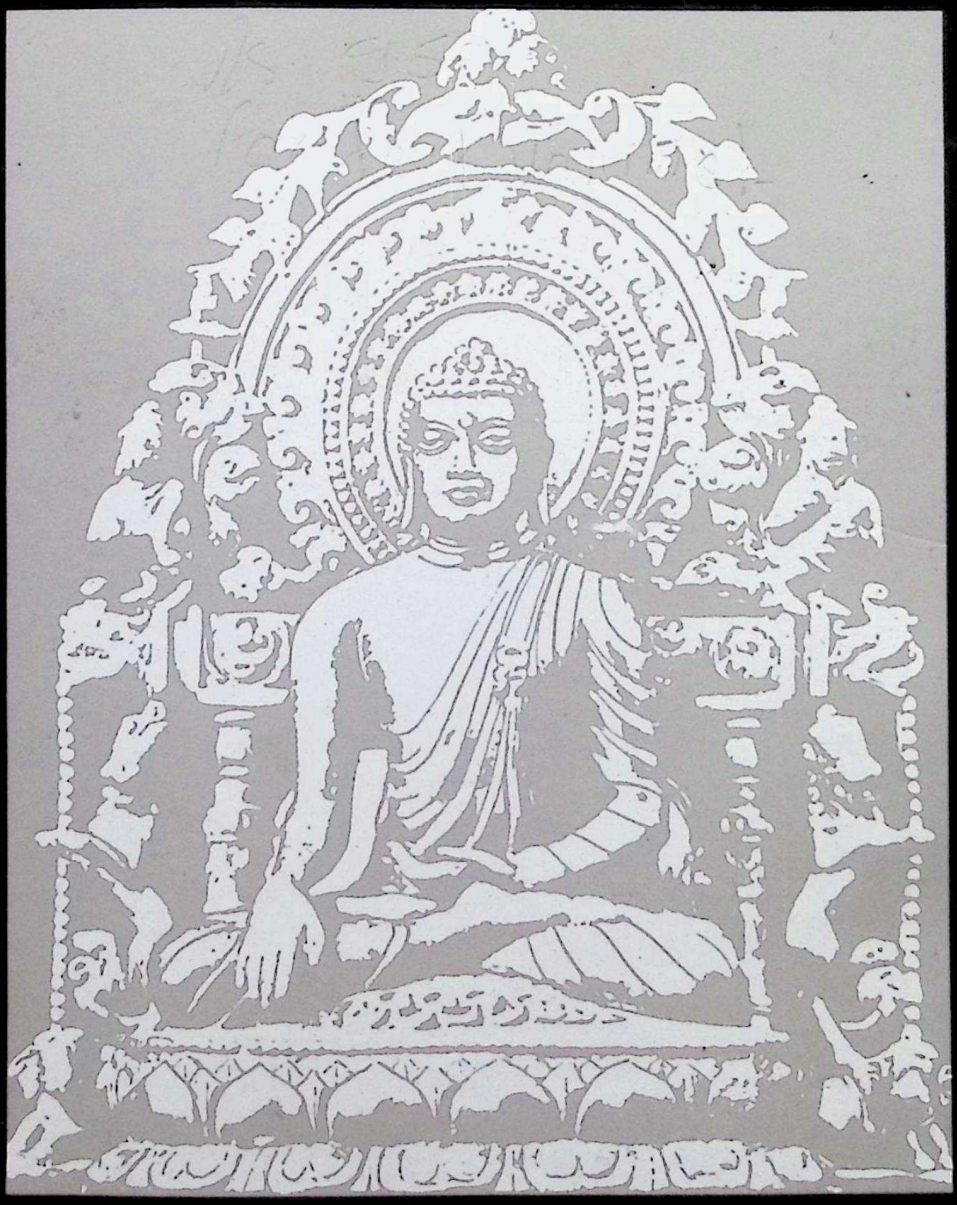
The Buddha's System of Meditation



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Practical Yoga is not openly taught by yogins. It is even difficult to get them to talk on the subject or to tell their experiences. Great differences exist between their practical experiences and the theoretical knowledge obtained from literature relating to Yoga, samādhi, or meditation, that is known to be extant today. Whatever be the method taught, learnt, or followed in meditation, the real thing ultimately depends on one's own experience in it.

The system of meditation outlined in this book is based on the experiences of the Buddha himself, and his disciples as contained in Pali literature to which the author has had access. The Master eschewed the theoretical method of knowing the truth. The practical method he adopted was one of meditation and the insight based on it. It consists of progressive steps, stages, and courses of Dhammas claimed to have been discovered, practised, and taught by the Master.

Whatever we find in the Buddha's system must have issued from his own experience or thinking; for he has sought none of the old authorities ever known to us for the ramifications of Dhammas obtaining in regions extending from gross to subtle, lower to higher, normal to supernormal, mundane to supramundane. It short, the Dhammas extend from bondage to liberation, self-entanglement to self-elimination, and Samsara to its extinction called Nibbana; evidently this is a unique system.

The work has been executed in several phases. This was inevitable as the author has had to go through voluminous literature in the original to discover the essence of the Buddha's teaching. He began writing it in 1974 following four decades of his quest for truth. The work is dedicated to His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal.

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The Buddha's System of Meditation

Ayodhya Prasad Pradhan

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TO HIS MAJESTY
KING BIRENDRA BIR BIKRAM SHAH DEV
KING OF NEPAL

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Preface

YOGINS DO not teach practical *yoga* nor do they speak on this subject. There is a vast difference between their practical experience and the theoretical knowledge obtained from extant literature on the subject. The essence in meditation ultimately comes from one's own experience. The method is of the system followed by the Master and his disciples authenticated in the Pāli text and commentary. Since the Master eschewed the theoretical method of realising truth, the practical method adopted was virtually the method of meditation and of insight based upon it and leading the yogin from Sansāra to Nibbāna. Each phase of this research contains the gradually progressive steps of realization termed "Dhammas" and claimed to have been practised, discovered and taught by the Master.

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General Introduction

Practical Approach to the Unapproachable

THE Buddha's system of meditation would primarily rest on his discovery of the basic trance and its potentialities before his Enlightenment (*Abhisambodhi* or *Sammasambodhi*). The process of his meditative efforts leading him to this discovery exists in relevant materials scattered in the Buddhist Canon, specially in the Basket (Collection) of Discourses (*Sutta-piṭaka*). This unique insight must have been the climax of his meditative efforts, intellectual activities, a never-ending process of escalation, and transcending capacity of what is known and unknown. This climax would thus appear to be *Nibbana* in the Buddhist sense, negative to every conception of it, but positive to its recipient.

Accordingly, a practical approach to the Unapproachable would be to take an objective view of his discovery and the process leading to it and set ourselves to work out a systematic exposition of his whole enterprise. This is possible. Buddhist literature, both ancient and modern, canonical, commentatorial, and non-canonical, has given us enough materials, authentic, semi-authentic, and derived, which might be utilized for this purpose. The authenticity of these materials would consist of the correct reproduction of the original source reaching back to the Master, Gautama Buddha, twenty-sixth

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century hence, or the interpretation of the original text in a way compatible with the context of the same and similar texts of the canon under consideration.

The semi-authentic materials would include the matter of the works accepted as authentic either in the commentary or by medieval elders of the Buddhist Order. The materials derived from the authentic and semiauthentic works would include the matter of works based on the Buddhist Canon, doctrine, accepted or controversial subject. These three broad categories of Buddhist literature often help us in evaluating the matter we use out of this vast body of literature in our research. The practical approach would demand more cautiousness in choosing relevant and supporting matters for the subject under research than the traditional one. Any mistaken lead may land us in a blind alley.

The exposition of the enterprise or endeavour of the Bodhisattva, Siddhartha, would entail the interpretation also of events occurring around him. But the supernormal element is often so intricately interwoven in these events that the main difficulty becomes one of separating the normal from the supernormal. And any attempt at demarcating these two areas ultimately assumes the form of arbitrary choice at our own discretion. This choice may certainly be open to objection and controversy from diverse points of view. There is possibly no alternative to this. As otherwise the fulfilment of the objective of this type of research would never be achieved. For it is imperative that a practical approach be adopted also towards his life, meditation and insight.

However exalted an image of the Master, the Buddha, might have set up in the Buddhist scripture, he was basically a human being born, bred and maturing in the human environment of the world of those times. For only a human being intimately conversant with the woes and travails of his fellow-beings can be expected to help them effectively. Hence it is but natural for us to think that the Shākya Prince, Siddhartha, started his life as we do; that he adjusted himself to the social environment as we learn to do; that he faced its ordeals as we have to do. He had a past of variegated lives which we also might have had but have forgotten; but it makes no material difference, if

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one has to start one's life over again. Thus the practical approach has its own *raison d'etre.*

The spirit of what we have said above is present in a number of discourses pertaining to his pre-enlightenment life. In one of these discourses, entitled "Fear and Terror" (*Bhayabherava sutta*) of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (I.4) delivered at Sāvatthi, he explains to Jāṇussoni Brāhmana, the royal priest of Kosala, how he had investigated the circumstances of dread felt in a lonely place; how he had found out that the dread was due to moral and psychological weakness; and how he had dispelled it on the spot as soon as it arose. Neither the text nor the commentary specifies the place and the period of time of these experiments conducted by the Bodhisattva.

The same or similar spirit is found in another discourse named "Dvedhā Vitakka suttam" or 'the Bifurcated Deliberation' of the same *Nikāya* (I.19). It was also delivered at Sāvatthi. The audience was the congregation of monks. Herein the Master relates to the monks how he had, before his enlightenment, divided his mental deliberations (Vitakkas) into two categories, the good and the evil; how he detected them as soon as they arose in his mind; how the evil deliberations vanished as he deliberated on their demerits; how the good ones stayed as he deliberated on their merits; and how the good ones so deliberated on stayed on even the whole day and night. This is doubtlessly a marvel, but a human feat after all.

The discourse on the "Impediment" (*Upakkilesa sutta*) of the same *Nikāya* (III. 28) gives us an insight into his method of stabilizing samādhi in a similar line. This was delivered to Anuruddha and his two companions, the monks from the Shākyan country, in the Eastern Bamboo Garden near Kosambi. When he heard their complaint that the meditative light and vision of forms appeared in their meditation but disappeared before long, he related to them his own experience previous to his attainment of enlightenment. He told them the eleven causes of the disappearance of light and vision from samādhi; how he detected these causes one by one; how he removed each of them apparently by the trial and error method; and how he succeeded ultimately to stabilize samādhi.

The above discourse is one of the few suttas in which we

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find sure evidence that the Bodhisattva had to adopt his own method of trial and error in organizing and stabilizing samādhi. This discourse proves our thesis also that he had to start his meditative enterprise as a human being like any one of us. The merit complex earned in innumerable births presumably did not help him much at least in obtaining samādhi ready-made in a a single attempt. The commentary on this sutta says that the light (Obhāsa) witnessed either by those Shakya monks or the Master was the preliminary light (*Parikamma obhāsa*), while the vision of forms (*Dassanan-ca-rupānam* was through the divine eye, and that the samādhi obtaining in these phenomena was a preliminary one.

The commentatorial stand on the above question is obviously untenable on the last two counts, divine eye and samādhi. For the divine eye is organized and obtained in a basic jhāna or samādhi, according to the *Visuddhi-magga* itself. And the samādhi generating the divine eye cannot be of a preliminary type, according to it again. The light is an impediment to an intellectual approach to supramundane insight, it is said. And the commentary equates this samādhi with the light. So the commentary takes a dogmatic view of this meditative light as a preliminary light, wherever this light is met with in other *suttas* also. But the context shows that the Master arrived through this process at the ultimate state of Arhatship. The commentary, however, admits that the Master's precept herein is of a mixed nature being mundane and supramundane.

Moreover, the commentary is silent on the question of place and time where and when the Master tried the above experiment. It is only on the last part of the precept about the Master's organizing the three types of samādhi, deliberative conceptual (Sa-Vitakka Sa-vicāra), non-deliberative conceptual (A-vitakka Vicāra-matta), and non-deliberative non-conceptual (A-vitakka A-vicāra) after he had removed all the impediments and stabilized samādhi that the commentary says as follows: "When did the Master contemplate these three kinds of samādhi? In the last part of the night while he was seated beneath the Bodhi Tree." The commentatorial tradition evidently tries to cluster every achievement of the Master under this tree and on the last watch of the night of his Enlightenment.

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Autobiography *versus* Biography of the Buddha

The literature on the life-story of Siddhārtha, Bodhisattva or Mahāsattva, and Buddha is prolific. No one has presumably ever tried to construct a biography of the Buddha out of the materials scattered throughout the Buddhist Canon. Such a biography as this would have been at least consistent with the matter of the Canon. What we have about his life is either a commentatorial version, or a poetic creation, or a narrative based on textual and commentatorial stories, or a modern attempt at a connected story of his life. These are all laudable and have their own individual merits. But they give us little lead into what he was after, why he was dissatisfied with the then current yoga and philosophy, why he resorted to a practice he had to denounce later, how he was attracted to his own earlier form trance again, and how he developed it to attain *Nibbāna*.

The commentatorial version is found in many places where the commentator thinks fit to give it in the context. It is therefore insufficient for the purpose mentioned above. The complete version in its own way is given in the second part (*Avidūre Nidāna*) of the Introduction to the Jātaka Commentary. The story begins from the descent of the Bodhisattva (from the mythical region called the Tusita) of practically the foetal germination, through the birth, the prophecy, the seed festival, the four signs, etc., etc., to the attainment of Enlightenment. The last or third part (*Santike Nidāna*) of the Introduction proposes to give us the accounts of his life from the Seat of Enlightenment (Bodhimaṇḍa), through his forty-five years of Ministry, to the Bed of Great Passing Away (*Mahāparinibbāna*). But the story ends at the Donation of Monastery by Anathapiṇḍika in Sāvatthi. The period would cover only a few years after the Enlightenment.

Had the afore-mentioned Introduction of the Jātaka Commentary given us at least the list of events of the rest of his life, it would have rendered the greatest service to the Buddhist world. For the listing of these possible events, if it be undertaken now, would consume a great many years of our life. The most difficult thing for us in this listing would be the

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arrangement of correct or likely sequence of events. Nevertheless any biography of the Buddha, worth the name and utility, would requíre this list at every step of its progress. The period of the Master's eventful life between his boyhood and renunciation is thus obscure excepting the little light thrown over it by the two short sections of the *Nidāna Kathā* of the said Introduction and even by the relative portion of the autobiography to be described below.

As a matter of fact, the *Lalita-vistara* of the Mahāyāna sect of Buddhism gives us fuller and more consistent accounts of his life from his descent (from the Tusita region) to the attainment of Enlightenment than the corresponding accounts of the Pali *Nidāna Kathā* mentioned above. It is difficult for us to decide which of the two versions of his life is reliable. It would be perhaps better to put the question like this: Which of the two or any other is more consistent with the Canon it faithfully represents ? A comparison of the two versions might show to an independent observer that the emotion expressed in the *Lalita-vistara* reflects his thought and feeling more life-like than that in the *Nidāna Kathā*. The technical terms and characteristic modes of style in the *Lalita-vistara* are the same as we find in the Pali suttas; the difference lies in language only.

We are not going to express any opinion on a poetic creation of his life. For the poet's imagination might not tally with our need of hard facts about his life. On the other hand, a narrative based on textual and commentatorial stories may be very useful provided the source is clearly and separately shown. A modern attempt at constructing his life is surely the need of the present moment provided the textual matter and commentatorial one are made the background of any thesis of the writer regarding his life. Any distortion of the old source should be carefully avoided; for the traditional outlook and sentiment might be unnecessarily outraged thereby; for the Buddha is the climax of human aspirations.

The autobiographical portion of his life is wonderfully life-like. The suttas containing it are as authentic as the oldest component of the Buddhist Canon, the *Majjhima Nikāya*. No better account of his life can be obtained with greater authenticity

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and liveliness than this portion of his biography recounted by himself. The liveliness is not merely due to the first person, who is the Buddha himself, speaking to the second person before the audience and congregation of monks and laymen, but the very tone and sentiment contained in the statement of this exceptional memoir. The inspiration of making such a statement as this would appear to us as a mere human impulse to communicate one's unforgettable experience to others at appropriate moments.

The suttas mentioned above are the Mahāsaccaka (I. 36), the Budhirājakumāra (II. 35), and Saṅgārava (II. 50), all of the *Majjhima Nikāya* of the Sutta Piṭaka. The account related by the Master is literally identical in the biographical portion of his own experiences from his renunciation to his attainment of the Enlightenment. The account in the second sutta (II. 35) goes farther than this and covers the story from his Enlightenment to the conversion of the group of five monks who had attended on him during his six years' austerities in Uruvelā. The importance of this autobiographical statement lies primarily in the authenticity of its being the very text of the sutta. Moreover, we have precise answers to our probable questions on the Buddha's system of meditation and its potentialities from this simple but unique autobiography.

This account tells us only about events having a direct bearing on his quest, endeavour, and achievement. Thus we miss herein the four signs, the allurement of the harem, the birth of the infant son, the exit on Kanthaka's back with Channa, the appearance of Māra at the gate of Kapilavastu, the crossing of the Anomā river, the meeting with King Bimbisāra, Sujātā's food, the struggle with Māra and his army, and lastly, the twin miracle after his achievement of Enlightenment. The omission of these events from the autobiography of the Master should not discredit the *Nidāna Kathā* of the Pāli Jātaka Commentary and the story of the *Lalita-vistara*; for most of these events are directly or indirectly supported by and inferred from other sources of the Canon.

The blank pages of his early life were unfortunately left so blank possibly for two reasons. The one and principal reason might have been the unwillingness of the clergy to blur

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the supramundane image of the Master by overcrowding it with mundane matters not directly contributing to the propagation and realization of the Dhamma the Master professed. As otherwise, there were already many members of the clergy from the Shākyan and Koliyan countries who must have heard many stories of his from his childhood to maturity. There was Kāludāyi, the close companion of his household life, in the Sangha. The charioteer of the Prince, Channa, was already in the Order, who had received a severe punishment of Brahma-daṇḍa, for persisting in the old notion that the Buddha was his (Channa's), at the posthumous order of the Master himself.

In the nunnery there were many nuns from the Shākya and Koliya houses headed by Mahāpajāpati Gotami, the foster-mother of the Prince himself. Besides, there were very large numbers of Shākyan and Koliyan converts as laymen and lay-women who must have known the Prince from his very child hood, to say the least. The younger generation must have been even inquisitive about the early life of the Master. So there was no dearth of the early accounts of the Master during his life-time and even years after his Great Passing Away. But the unwillingness of the clergy and devoted laity to commit to memory or writing anything not positively preached by the Master must have been the probable cause, next to the above-mentioned, of omission and then gradual oblivion of the early life of the Master excepting the very few of the factual, doubtful, controversial, or invented matters we have at present.

The second and secondary reason might have been the etiquette of the time against the divulging of the personal matters of great persons. So no one of his interlocutors is found to have inquired of him of his personal particulars. Neither his disciples, monks or nuns, nor the laymen including kings and princes devoted to him ever asked about the particulars of his early or household life, excepting the accounts he chose to relate to them of his own accord. His personal name, Sarvārtha-siddha or Siddhārtha, Siddhattha in Pāli, was never joined to the Buddha. He called himself as Tathāgata, the meaning of which is hinted at by himself. In the truncated account of his autobiography given

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in the Pāsarāsi sutta (I. 26) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, he corrects the monks of the five groups who address him as friend (Āvusa), or by name, as follows:

"Don't, Monks! behave (call or address) Tathāgata by name and by the term of friend. Arahan (the Liberated One), Monks! is Tathāgata, Samma-Sambuddha." In another discourse of the same Nikāya, "Dhātuvi-bhaṅga sutta" (III. 40), a prince of Takkasīla-nagara (Taxila) named Pukkusāti is said to have met the Master incognito in Rājagaha in a potter's shed. The commentary gives us a full account of his renunciation in the name of the Buddha and his travelling on foot all the way from Taxila through Sāvatthi to Rājagaha and sought there shelter in a potter's shed. The text mentions however that he had renounced in the name of the Blessed One (the Buddha), and that the potter was called Bhaggava (Bhārgava in Sanskrit). The text and the commentary however widely differ as regards the Master's sojourn at the time.

The text says that the Master making a round (Cārikā) in Magadha country moved towards Rājagaha and sought the same potter's shed for one night's stay. The commentary on the other hand says that the Master was in Sāvatthi then. Early in the morning the same day, the Master, while scanning the world, saw the man, Pukkusāti, and knew his mission as well as his imminent destiny. So after taking a round in Sāvatthi for alms, he started alone on foot for Rājagaha and arrived at the potter's shed towards the evening the same day, a distance of forty-five yojanas. The Master and the would-be disciple stayed in the same shed without the latter knowing the former, but textually without their knowing each other. They both sat in meditation far into the night. The Master liked his behaviour and asked him his particulars and was told that the latter had renounced in the name of the Buddha and that he was the Teacher.

On asking a few more questions to Pukkusāti, the Master learnt that the Buddha was in Sāvatthi then (as he had already missed the Buddha in Sāvatthi en route and learnt in the city that very day that the Master was dwelling in Sāvatthi). The Master further learnt from him that he had never seen the Buddha before and that he was unable to know the Master

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even if he should see him (the Master). Then the Master asked him to listen and delivered the main principle of this sutta. The disciple then realized that the preceptor must be the Master himself. Consequently, he asked the Master's pardon for his disrespectful address to the Master with the term of friend (Ābusa). He was pardoned. He had then and there attained the third stage of supramundane insight.

The imminent danger to the life of this unique disciple came to pass soon after he left the Master in search of a monk's robe and pot for his initiation and ordination at the Master's hand. A stray cow protecting her young calf in the street rushed at and gored him to death with her horn. The Master was duly informed by the monks of this tragic mishap. They asked the Master of what his future destiny or status would be. The answer was, as stated above, the attainment of the third stage of liberation. Informed thereof the King of Magadha, Bimbisāra, gave him a royal cremation and ordered the erection of a stupa (Thupa in Pali) over his ashes. The commentary further says that on the return journey the "Master coming (proceeding) through the sky (air) appeared (descended) in the scented cell (Gandha-kuṭi) of the Jetavana (Monastery in Sāvatthi)."

This is why and how the commentary tries to reconcile the internal inconsistent statement of the text with such a story as the travel of the Master between Sāvatthi and Rājagaha apparently for the report of Pukkusāti to the Master that the Buddha was in Sāvatthi then. This discrepancy could have been easily explained by stating simply that the information of Pukkusāti was not correct and that the Master was on a begging tour (Cārikā), as stated in the sutta. The Master's travel on foot to Rājagaha was however emotionally correct, if we accept the commentatorial version. For the disciple, the prince of Taxila, had walked all the way from his city through Sāvatthi to Rājagaha, a distance of two hundred minus eight yojanas, on bare foot. And the Master "neither rose in the sky nor shortened (the path of) the earth. . . .thinking 'I should also walk on foot' went on foot." This is certainly understandable. The importance of this sutta may be appreciated also by the

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space of twenty-four pages of large size in the Burmese script the commentary has devoted to it.

It is therefore difficult for us to decide, from the commentary, whether we are to accept its version or we are to interpret the text as it stands. It is at least plain that the commentary does not dare to change the original text, but puts its own meaning and reasoning with additional matters on the text. In all fairness to the commentary, we find a correct position adopted by it in providing a human environment around the Buddha. For it says, commenting on the Discourse of Great Sacred Story (Mahāpadāna sutta) of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, as follows:

"There happen many miracles of omniscient Bodhisattvas ...Therein if neither their birth-place, nor father, nor mother, nor wife, nor son be known, the people might think (like this): 'These (Bodhisattvas have neither their known birth-place, nor father, nor mother, nor wife, nor son. Suppose, this (Bodhisattva) is either a Deva (heavenly being), Sakka (Lord of Devas), or Māra (Subtle Controller), or Brahmā (Lord of Meditative Region). This sort of miracles (performed) by heavenly beings is no wonder.' Thinking thus, the people might consider him to be worth neither listening to nor adoring. There would be thereby no mass-conversion to Dhamma (Abhisamaya). In the absence of mass-conversion to Dhamma the birth of the Buddha would be meaningless (niratthakam) and his ministry (Sasanam) ineffectual for salvation (Aniyyānikam)."

This is however a commentatorial position, not a textual one. At any rate the above two instances of attention drawn to the impoliteness being caused even by an address of familiarity to the Buddha prove our second and secondary reason advanced above for the paucity of likely and necessary details about his early life. The etiquette of the time must have prevented inquisitive persons from collecting these materials. For in a number of suttas of the first two Nikāyas, we find prominent persons putting their questions most politely to the Master even for the purpose of confirming what they had heard about him. Thus in the Mahāli (I. 6) and Pāthika (II. 1) suttas of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the Slit-lip (Oṭṭhaḍḍha) Licchavi in Vesāl

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and Bhaggava Paribbājaka (wanderer) in Anupiya, a town of the Mallas, respectively, try very politely to confirm from the Master what Sunakkhatta, the son of Licchavi, said to them about his complaint against the Master.

There are also some instances of impoliteness shown to the Buddha, which provoked him to throw light on some important subject. For example, in the Ambaṭṭha sutta (I. 3) of *Digha Nikāya*, Ambaṭṭha, the apprentice of Pokkharasāti Brāhmaṇa, the priest of King Pasendi, had been sent as a messenger to the Master by the Brāhmaṇa from Ukkaṭṭhā to Icchānaṅgala, both being villages in Kosala. The audacious youth showed and expressed words of impoliteness to the Master. This brought about the disclosure of the origin of the youth's ancient lineage by the Master. It clearly showed that the youth belonged to a lineage, the originator of which was the son of a slave girl, named Disā, serving King Okkāka, the ancestor of the Shākyas. This reference naturally necessitated the recounting of the origin of the Shākyas by the Master. This short story of the Shākyan origin seemingly gave rise to a considerable literature on the origin of the Shākyan and Koliyan houses.

Both the stories of the origin of Kaṇhayāna, the ancestry of Ambaṭṭha, and the Shākyas must have been known but kept secret among the descendants. For the Brāhmaṇa youth challenged by the Master admitted that he had heard the story as told by the Master. The story of the origin of the Shākyas, if fictitious, might have been refuted by the Shākyas themselves. These few instances show that the particulars of the early life of the Master were not duly collected and recorded as said above.

Eulogy, Marvels, and Miracles

Our effort for a practical approach to the Buddha's system of meditation and his life and work derived from his autobiography and reliable materials of his early years meets with unsurmountable hurdles in the profusion of eulogies, marvels, and miracles surrounding his person, accumulated merits, and achievements. Amidst these overgrowths in the text and commentary of Buddhism, it is but natural that we often lose sight of a practical human approach needed to accomplish our

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objective in conducting this research. We might probably wonder at these prolific growths of praise and supernormal phenomena round the nucleus of human drama of hard facts. The explanation is provided to some extent by the commentary itself.

The discourse of the Great Gathering (Mahā-samaya sutta) of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (II. 7) gives us an extraordinary description of earthly and heavenly beings in the great forest (Mahāvana) of Kapilavatthu. These beings had come over there from ten quarters of the cosmic world to visit the Master on the occasion of five hundred Shākyan and Koliyan monks attaining Arhatship, according to the commentary, on the very same day. The commentary on this sutta gives us in addition an interesting account of the quarrel between Shākyan and Koliyan labourers over the water of the Rohini river flowing between the two cities. They scandalized the ancestry of both the Shākyan and Koliyan houses. This provocation was enough to excite the princes of both the houses to engage in an imminent battle between them.

The Master came over there and pacified both the parties by narrating five Jātaka stories. Then and there five hundred Shākyan and Koliyan youths were asked by their respective citizenry to become monks in the Master's Order. They did, under compulsion. Their wives, who were of Koliya-nagara and Devadaha-nagara (as given in the commentary of the Nandakovāda sutta of the *Majjhima Nikāya*), kept on sending them messages of urgent return to household life. They began to waver, so to say. The Master prevented it by a contrivance of a mythical spatial journey with these five hundred dissident disciples to the Kuṇala lake in the Himalayas. A long story entitled the Kuṇāla Jātaka (No. 536) was told them after a dramatic display of a royal procession of Kuṇāla, the King of Himalayan birds, before them. Naturally they were converted to the Dhamma and attained the first stage of noble insight. This enabled them, strangely enough, to acquire the Iddhi of travelling through the air.

The Iddhi of this category is obtainable either by resolve based on the foundation trance, or by the stabilization of Arhatship. They had been carried to the Himalayas through

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the air by the Master, on the return journey they could do so by their own Iddhi obtained through the attainment of the Sotāpatti-magga, the path of the first stage. Moreover, this unexpected journey must have contributed to the belief that the Master visited the valley of Nepal and Ceylon and other places, current among the devotees of these countries. There is also a different version of this quarrel between the two houses, as given in the said Jataka commentary. It says at the beginning of the story:

"Other teachers (Ācariyas) think: 'The servant girls (dāsis) of the Shākyas and Koliyas went to the river for the purpose of water. Putting the clothes down upon the ground, they sat down for friendly talk. One of them took up the cloth of another, thinking it to be her own. Thereupon the quarrel arose by (saying) 'this is your cloth, this is my cloth'. . . . And they say so. But the former (quarrel over the water of the Rohini river) is found in many more commentaries than the latter. The former is reasonable also and should be accepted."

The commentary of the *Majjhima Nikāya* on the Nandakovāda sutta, on the other hand, gives the latter version. This commentary also gives us an important piece of information about Mahāpajāpati Gotami and the five hundred ladies of these five hundred princes. The sequence derived from other sources is also important. The father of Siddhārtha, Suddhodana, had already passed away after gaining arhatship; Mahāpajāpati had become an ordained nun; these five hundred princesses despaired of their husbands' return, left home and sought and obtained initiation and ordination at the hand of the Queen-mother.

From the few examples given above, we see that the Jātaka story was utilized for illustration of moral principles by the Master. The portion of current context in it gives us information which may help us in determining the sequence of events connected with the life and work of the Master. The supernormal element cannot be totally eliminated from it. The commentator himself appears to be helpless in these overgrowths. The different versions of the same event give him as much trouble as they do to us. We may scoff at them at our leisure, but he could not have done so at the risk of getting strongly

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denounced by the elders. The incident of the quarrel of the two houses should not have differed at least in the commentaries of the first two Nikāyas. For the translator of these works into Pāli is acknowledged to be the same person, Buddhaghosa. The reason for such a difference as stated above must have been the uncertainty of information. When the commentary itself is uncertain, we have no alternative but to adopt a practical approach and put it to a critical test.

Now we are going to see if we can make out anything of the commentatorial opinion about these overgrowths, specially the eulogistic one. It is termed 'Artha-vāda' in Sanskrit. In Pāli commentatorial terms, it is given as 'Vaṇṇa-bhūmi; or 'Vaṇṇa-bhaṇana-bhūmi.' The above terms mean 'praise, eulogy' etc. The commentary of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (II. 1.) on the Great Sacred Story (Maha-apadāna sutta) says: "This is the ground of praise (Vaṇṇa-bhūmi). One should state as much as one can (Yattakam sakkoti, tattakam vattabbam)". The commentory of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (III. 9.) on the Great Full Moon (Mahāpuṇṇama sutta) says: "This is the ground of praise (Vaṇṇa-bhūmi, or Vaṇṇa-bhaṇana-bhūmi). Herein the measure (of stating praise) is only the capacity of the expounder of the dhamma (Dhamma-kathikassa eva ettha thāmo pamāṇam). One should state as much as one can. But one should not state what is ill-said (dukkathitam)."

This opinion or advice or ruling of the commentary is certainly very significant. For the commentary is often found to have fully taken advantage of this ruling. In other words, the eulogy can be expanded to any length we can, provided it be well-said. Hence we get a glimpse into the overgrowth at least of eulogistic matter around the Buddha, his life and achievements, and his principal disciples. So much for the commentatorial overgrowths. Now the question arises as to whether or not the commentary only followed the textual trend of such an expansion as shown above. The numerous repetitive passages (peyyālas) in the text show that each of these could be applied and added to an appropriate context, if the reciter wished to do so. In fact, the recitation of the text can or could be made in extenso, only if the peyyālas are repeated in full.

Accordingly, the eulogistic passages of the Buddha, the

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Dhamma, and the Sangha could be collected and made into a separate work for recitation. This work would give a set form of praise or prayer to the triple gem (Ratanattaya) in several Bhāṇavaras (a Bhāṇavara generally consists of one thousand complete words (Padas) roughly equivalent on an average to twenty-five hundred words in Pāli). Conversely, we can put these passages of praise aside for the time being and apply ourselves solely to practical matters. We should not forget that the service to the Triple Gem is to discover the central core of the Master's system and not merely to add a mass of eulogy to obscure it still further. The short formula of salutation to the Buddha appears to be a contrivance to escape, in a way, the unbearable load of eulogistic overgrowths.

Now we come to the question of marvels and miracles intricately interwoven in Buddhism. These will appear to be a difficult problem at first sight. We cannot solve it satisfactorily. It would be obviously impolite or impious to deny them outright. Our modern ideology would not allow us to entertain them for a moment; for we have never seen even a bit of them in real life. During the time of the Master himself, a number of prominent persons do not seem to have been either aware of these phenomena, or favourably impressed with them. We are however not quite certain, if the literature dealing with these phenomenal events was in existence at the time under consideration. Some of them at least are traditionally accepted. It would be commonplace either to accept or deny them. A few of them are really worth our close study and tentative acceptance. For example, the stationary shadow of the rose-apple tree, under which Siddhārtha had obtained the form trance in Kapilavastu; the four signs specially the last one; the interference or attack of the Māra and allurement of his three daughters; deep trance and intellectual penetration during the weeks of Enlightenment; visit of spiritual beings and regions; mystic regions and beings; unusual signs on the release of vital force by the Buddha.

The supernormal phenomena operated or operable by the Master should be tentatively accepted; for the potentialities of trance are unexplored as yet and no one in our modern world at present is competent to pronounce a definite opinion

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on this most important subject. In fact, our opinion on this subject means nothing; we are, so to say, mere novices in this vast field of mystery, fantasy, and doubt. The record of these happenings might be much exaggerated in the relevant tradition. If they be even partly and roughly correct, we cannot deride our own potential power and refuse; for the Master's system is not restricted only to the particular clergy or laity, it is open to all those who can; and those who try and succeed may beat even the greatest and the highest pretender in the field.

The system known as Buddhism originated from the Buddha's system of meditation and insight gained by him through it. If we are disposed to take it otherwise, the system would be something other than his own. Then that system discovered by the Buddha cannot be Buddhism, but some other doctrine grown and developed outside his own. For he could not have deceived himself by declaring that he had perfectly realized the truth whatever it might be and look in our eyes. His category of sorrow and suffering would actually include our current complaint against ourselves and the world at large. His discovery of eliminating this ill would certainly be very interesting. If it worked, the result would be doubtlessly marvellous and our escape therefrom miraculous. If we analyze our mind and its concomitants even cursorily, we might find ourselves imperceptibly drawn towards the minute analysis of them in the Abhidhamma-pīṭaka of the Buddhist Canon. It shows that our mind is a conglomeration of contradictions, illogical notions, hearsay beliefs, etc., and not only a concatenation of rational thoughts.

Chronology *versus* Sequence of Events

The real chronology of the Master's life begins not from his birth, but from his decease, the Great Passing Away (Mahāparinibbāna). This great and important event must have been well remembered by his disciples throughout the then Buddhist world. The claim over his ashes for the erection of the stūpas (Thupa in Pāli) in the locality and countries of the respective claimants, fully detailed in the Mahāparinibbāna sutta, shows that the event was widely known. It could not have been forgotten for a few centuries at least. The exact date of this event

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is unfortunately uncertain. It was the full-moon day of the first month, Vaisākha; we learn from the Samantapāsādikā, the commentary of the Vinaya Piṭaka, that it was in the last part of the night (Paccusa-samaya) of the full-moon day of the first month (Vaisākha-puṇṇama-divasa).

The year of the Buddhistic world begins from this very event. The same commentary says: "On the eighth year of Ajātasattu, the Sammasambuddha passed away. In the same year Vijaya-kumāra, the son of Sīhakumāra, the earliest king (Ādi-rājā) of the island of Tambapaṇṇi, having come over this (imam, noticeable word) island, populated it." Now Ajātasattu, the son of Bimbisāra, is the king of Magadha, who was the principal listener of the Samanna-phala sutta of the *Digha Nikāya*. The commentary on this sutta gives us further information about this king. It says: "Ajātasattu murdered Bimbisāra; Udaya, (murdered) Ajātasattu; his son, Mahāmuṇdika, (murdered) Udaya; his son, Anuruddha, (murdered) Mahāmuṇdika; his son, Nāgadāsa, (murdered) Anuruddha. Thinking 'that these kings are the destroyers of (own royal) race, and what (we have to do) with these,' the citizens, enraged, killed Nāgadāsa."

The Samantapāsādikā continuing the account (introductory part) gives us the reigning years of these kings upto King Asoka as below: "Sammāsambuddha having passed away (from that time on), Ajātasattu ruled (his kingdom) for 24 years; Udaya-bhadda for 16 years; Anuruddha and Muṇḍa for 8 years; Nāgadāsa for 24 years. (This amounts to 72 years). Susunāga for 18 years; his own son Kālāsoka for 28 years; then his sons, ten-brother kings, ruled for 22 years. After them, Nine Nandas (ruled) for 22 years only; Candagutta for 24 years; Bindusāra for 28 years. At the end of this, (King) Asoka obtained the kingdom. Before his coronation (there were) four years; (this would give us 218 years after the Parinibbāna); on the 18th year of (his) coronation, the Elder Mahinda was established in this (to be noted) island (Ceylon). According to this royal genealogy, it should be understood."

It is to be marked that this commentary refers to 'this island' (Ceylon), and to 'that place' (Magadha). This clearly shows that the commentatorial works of Buddhaghosa's translation were compiled in the Island of Tambapaṇṇi, Lanka, or Ceylon.

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The original in parts or whole might have been in the Magadhi Prākrit or Pāli. But the works Buddhaghosa got to translate into Pāli were obviously composed in Sinhalese and in this Island said to have been populated by the pioneer king Vijaya in the year of the Master's decease. The commentary compares the reign of the kings of both the countries, Magadha and the Island, ruling contemporaneously, in order to fix the year of the Mahāparinibbāna with reference to the regnal years. There was obviously no alternative to it in the probable absence of a common era. This common era might have served as a common one for or in the Buddhist countries at least. But the uncertainty arose when this era was met with the Christian era. The synchronism did not tally and the latter won the day.

The comparison of the reign of the two lines of the kings might generate a spirit of research even in casual readers. Research is a taste for precise conception, so to say. Otherwise it would have been enough to state that a Buddha had been born in the western Terai of Nepal about twenty-six centuries hence. The comparison is given as below: "In Jambudipa, on the 14th year of Udaya-bhadda herein (Ceylon) Vijaya died. On the 15th (that is, next) year, Paṇḍu-vāsudeva got the reign (became the king) in this island. Therein on the 20th year of King Nāgadāsaka, herein Paṇḍuvāsudeva died. In the same year the prince named Abhaya became the king. Therein in the 17th year of King Susunāga, herein 20 years of King Abhaya were completed. Then on the 20th year of Abhaya, a Dāmarika (Dravid?) named Pakuṇḍābhaya seized the reign (Rajjam). Therein on the 16th year of Kālāsoka, herein 17 years of Pakuṇḍābhaya were completed. These (17 years) with one year later make 18 (years). Therein on the 14th year of Candagutta, herein Pakuṇḍābhaya died. And Muṭasiva-rājā (king) became king."

"Therein (Magadha) in the 17th year of Asoka-dhamma-rājā, herein Muṭasiva-rājā died. And Devānampiya Tissa became king." It is said above: "On the 236th year from the Parinibbāna (Decease) of Samma-sambuddha the Elder Mahinda was established in this Island." Thus in the Magadha country, Kālāsoka's reign began in the 90th year of Parinibbāna. The second Sangiti or Recension of the text was done in Vesāli.

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Then the King was Kālāsoka. And a century had passed after the Parinibbāna. When King Chandragupta Maurya began his reign probably about 322 before the Cristian era, it was the 162nd year of Parinibbāna. On the Accession of King Asoka, it was the 214th year. And his coronation (or consecration) year which came off four years later is said to fall on the 218th year of the Buddha's Parinibbāna. So far the commentary helps us consistently, but when we come to synchronize it with the Grecian and thereafter Christian dates, a great confusion arises to tally the Buddha era with the 544 B.C., at present. It should have been obviously 484 B.C. For the sum of the above two figures 322 B.C., and 162 amounts to 484 B.C., if we are to be guided by the chronology of the commentary cited above.

Nevertheless there is no confusion about the chronology of the main events of the Master's life, when we go back to them from his Decease. By analogy to our present practice with the Christian era, and if we indicate the year before and after Parinibbāna by 'B.P.' and 'A.P.', respectively, we can easily and briefly date the events. Thus Siddhārtha was born in Lumbini 80 years before Parinibbāna, 80 B.P. He made his Great Exit (Mahā-abhinikkhamanam) from Kapilavatthu in 51 B.P. The events of his early life can be dated between these two years, 80 B.B., and 51 B.P. He attained Perfect Enlightenment in 45 B.P. For his ministry is regarded as lasting for forty-five years, even if we give little credit to the six years of austerities. The period of time between these two dates, 51 B.P., and 45 B.P., can be filled up with the known events of his wandering life.

His eventful life during these forty-five years of his ministry can be possibly filled, if we devote time and labour to listing all the introductory portions of the suttas. The commentary may also help us substantially in determining the sequence of one sutta over another. The task is certainly very difficult, inasmuch as a huge number of suttas bears no introductory sentences. The first twenty years of Retreat for the rainy season given in the commentary may help us in sorting out the suttas delivered in those places. This list may even suggest the sequence of other suttas without Nidānas. At any

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rate an incomplete list also would be of immense help in identifying the Master's principal discourses in different versions. But unfortunately the places of the Retreat are only fourteen and many important ones seem to be left out.

To resume the topic of dating events, the Parinibbāna event and year must have been unforgettable at least among the Buddhist clergy and laity. So we find the coronation or consecration of Asoka being dated as 218 A.P. This date cannot be an erroneous reckoning. For the commentary on the Vinaya in the Introductory section (Bāhira-Nidāna-Kathā), gives us the names of five elders in a direct line with the Master, viz., Upāli, Dāsaka, Soṇaka, Siggava, and Moggaliputta Tissa. Now the first of this list is the famous Vinaya expert, and the last is the principal guide of the royal patron, Asoka. Upāli was the principal reciter of the Vinaya in the first Council of five hundred monks held in Rājagaha. In the second Council of seven hundred monks held in Vesāli, the year is given as 100 A.P. Then the fourth of the above list was a young monk. So the youth, Siggava, along with another young monk, was given the task of training the future savant Tissa, the fifth. Hence both the dates might equate nearly with their life-span.

But the period of a hundred years from the first Council to the second Council of monks covers four monks, from Upāli to Siggava, whereas the period of more than a century from the second to the third Council is made to be covered by two monks, Siggava and Tissa, only. The commentary, Aṭṭhasālini, of the first book of the Abhidhamma gives us, in its introduction, a series of fifteen names of monks, from Sāriputta to Revata. In this series three names are given in order, viz., Siggava, Sandeha, Moggaliputta (Tissa). Sandeha coming between the two names would have filled up the gap and solved our problem, but the series headed by Sāriputta does not allow us to do so. For we find a separate series of monks headed by Ānanda, Anuruddha, and Upāli. Sāriputta was the teacher of Ānanda, but not that of Upāli. This shows the difficulty of determining the chronology of those early times.

Nevertheless the year of Parinibbāna may prove of great help in dating the events before and after this year without

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synchronizing it with the prevalent Christian era. For synchronism will fail and be out of fashion, as soon as its criterion changes. At any rate the working hypothesis of King Asoka's coronation falling in 218 A.P. would serve our purpose sufficiently. It is said in the same commentary of the Vinaya introduction that the would-be Crown Prince, Mahinda, was initiated and ordained in the Order by Moggaliputta Tissa, Mahādeva, and Majjhantika monks in the 6th year of the Coronation, that is, 224 A.P. He was said to have been of twenty years of age then. So Mahinda was born obviously in 204 A.P. On the same occasion his own sister, Sanghamittā, aged eighteen years, was also initiated and ordained by Āyupāli and Dhammapāli nuns. Her husband, Aggibrahmā Kumāra, the son of King Asoka's sister, had sought two years earlier initiation and ordination on the occasion of a similar function of Tissa Kumāra, the King's own younger brother, in 222 A.P.

Mahinda completed his study of the Tipiṭaka in three years. In the meantime the notorious gap of seven years occurred, in the Asokārāma Monastery, of the non-functioning of Uposatha. Some time after its re-opening, the third Council of a thousand monks is said to have been convened and continued for nine months in Pāṭaliputta, under the chairmanship of Moggaliputta Tissa. It was here that the Elder composed his well-known work, Kathāvatthu, the Book of Controversy, comprising the 5th book of the Abhidhamma. He organized nine missions under ten leading monks for missionary works within and outside the Jambudīpa. All of these missions are said to have been remarkably successful. The mission under Mahinda was sent to Tambapaṇṇi. He reached the Island in 236 A.P. After the demise of Muṭasīva (176 A.P. to 235 A.P.), Devānampiya Tissa became the king of the Island, just one year before the Elder's arrival there.

Thus the Parinibbāna date is a convenient medium of dating the events before or after it, without confusing the issue with the controversial synchronism with the current and prevalent eras. For example, in the beginning of the Introduction (Bāhira kathā) of the *Milinda Pānha*, or Milinda's Question, we find a sentence meaning "Now (before the eyes) of our Blessed One

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(Buddha) as the Elder Moggaliputta Tissa was seen (that 'he would compose the Kathāvatthu, 218 years after my decease'), so these two (Nāgasena and Milinda) were also seen that 'they would be born after the lapse of five hundred years of my Parinibbāna'..." This will show at least that the Bāhirakathā estimated their appearance about 500 A.P. These estimates are symbolic, not precise; for the composition of the earlier work was accomplished in the third Council presumably and not in 218 A.P. but about 234 A.P.; and the later work containing the dialogue might have begun long before but only been completed about 500 A.P.

Accordingly, we find mention of symbolic years, which can be expressed in the Parinibbāna year and not in any current eras. For, how are we to give the dates of events mentioned in the text and the commentary of the monks and nuns and other persons? Surely not in the customary ways; for the importance of these dates lies in their sequence and import, not in their absolute or temporal value. These dates as proposed herein would stand as they are, even if the criteria change in the synchronism. Many suttas of the first two Nikāyas are evidently dated in their own way, which is not helpful at present. No one of the clergy or the laity kept any precise record of the event or happening; it was enough for them that the thing happened and the temporal question of it did not trouble or bother them. And when later the exact date was wanted, they had totally forgotten it.

In consonance with the peyyāla (repetition) of similar events, descriptions, circumstances, and situations, dates or days were also brought into something like peyyālas. Thus the mention of full-moon days is plentiful in the suttas; the intermediate days of the fortnight are rarely found or mentioned; the usual temporal term of "ekam samayam" (one time, that is, once upon a time) must have been as irksome to the reciter and the listener as it is to us now; the mention of the date of the occurrence would have enhanced the effect and authenticity of the sutta still more than what it does at present. This peyyāla of uncertainty is plentifully found in the introductory phrase of the atīta-vatthu (past story) of the Jātaka stories.

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For example, "Once upon a time or in the past when Brahmadatta was reigning in Vārāṇasi", is totally bereft of the concept of actuality; no one among us would ever think that the fact is given or introduced like this in our real life. The original method or mode of presentation can be scarcely thought to fall on this line or sort of naive make-believe.

Nevertheless the nucleus of authentic matters both in form and content is intact in early Buddhism. This nucleus can be profitably utilized in examining and evaluating the rest of the matters of the text and in some respect the commentary also. For the above-mentioned and other weighty reasons, most of the Jātaka stories as amplified in the Jātaka commentary are never taken seriously at present. It is mostly due to the indiscriminate use of the peyyāla.

Authenticity *versus* Consistency

The authenticity of the Pāli text and even the Pāli commentary will have to be accepted as we find them in the script of Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, Roman, Bengali, Devanāgari (India), etc.; unfortunately the original manuscript even in part is not available in Brāhmi or Kharoṣṭhi. From several suttas we know that some sort of script was surely in use and existence during the time of the Master; at least at the time of King Asoka there must have been a well developed script of Brāhmi, the specimen of which we find in his numerous inscriptions. It is a matter of great surprise that the clergy kept the text from being written down in the then prevailing script. For later on we find the scriptures being written down for the merit of doing so. It goes after all to the great credit of the King of Ceylon, Vaṭṭagāmaṇi, during whose rule the clergy devoted themselves to writing the whole text with their commentary in Sinhalese script; our thanks are certainly due to them. The gap of a few centuries is however regrettable.

But the real test of the authenticity of the Master's teaching must be sought in the experience we gain through the teaching whether or not the former corresponds with the latter; then and there only our labours would be meaningful to us. The main objective of this research work is to find this clue and present it in a practical way. With this objective in constant

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view, we can begin our work and practice from the most ordinary to the most desirable through gradual and patient steps. Besides this guiding principle, another source of authenticity is internal evidence within the text of the suttas bearing the same title or heading but scattered in different Nikāyas and even Piṭakas. Thus the Veranjā Sutta found in the Introductory Story (Pannatti Nidāna Kathā) is exceptionally a strange one. The Master with his five hundred monks had to pass the Retreat of the Rainy Season without getting even a handful of rice, in the township of Veranjā; the Master and the monks were fortunately saved from starvation by the horse-dealers of the Northern country, who were also sojourning in the same township for the rainy season.

These horse-dealers provided a measure (Pattha, about a quarter of a kilogram) of coarse grain (Pulaka, corn) for each monk. The monks cannot boil or cook the grain themselves. So they had to eat it raw just by grinding it in a mortar. Ānanda, who was not yet a regular attendant, crushing the grain upon a flat stone, used to serve it before the Master. It was a pity that the host, Beranja Brāhmaṇa, who had asked the Master to pass the rainy season, with his retinue of five hundred monks in the township, had totally forgotten to feed them for the entire period. This is certainly an exceptional case and speaks for the authenticity of the sutta. This sutta upto the Brāhmaṇa's declaration of his conversion as a layman is also found in the Beranjakā sutta (8.2.1) of the Aṅguttara Nikāya. This township seemingly lies in the north-west of the greater travelling area (Mahā-maṇḍala) of the Master. The intermediate places lying between Beranjā and Payāga Patiṭṭhana, viz., Soreyya, Saṅkassa, Kaṇṇakujja (Kannauja) are mentioned in the 12th chapter of the second book, Cullavagga, of the Vinaya Piṭaka also.

There is another Beranja sutta (I.42) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The Master was then in Sāvatthi, wherein some Brāhmaṇa householders from Beranja had been staying (temporarily). Hearing it they came to visit the Master and had been converted to Buddhism. The commentary does not inform us about the sequence of these three suttas. Probably this sutta (M.I.42) was the first in sequence. Since both the above

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mentioned suttas relate that the Master was then staying under the tree named 'Naleru Pucimanda' (Yakkha's Neem tree) in Beranjā, and since the first half of the sutta is substantially identical, we may take either of the two as the first. But the detail given in the first half also shows that the original sutta must have been the sutta found in the Vinaya. Now what are we to think about the sutta given in the Aṅguttara? The first half of the fuller sutta was probably included in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, under the Eight-item Nipāta; for there are eight items of charges made by Beranja (Udaya was the real name—commentary) against the Master.

Had it occurred at present, we would have raised a great hue and cry against Beranjā and towns adjacent to it. But the Master and the monks did not utter a single word against the inhabitants of the township and the erring Brāhmaṇa. This is after all normal. Now there begins the explanation of the cause of this pitiable circumstance. The commentary of the Vinaya says: "This Beranjā Brāhmaṇa (Udaya by name, much advanced in age) had most earnestly asked the Master for the sojourn (during three months) of the rainy season (Vassā-vāsa). Why did he not even know the presence of the Master (in his town?) it is (going to be) said. Due to the magical power (Avaṭṭanā) of Māra. Immediately after the Beranjā Brāhmaṇa had left the Master (after his declaration of laymanship), Māra having deluded and used the magical power (Avaṭṭanā) over the whole town (nagara) all around a yojana (of ground) where it is possible to return after roaming for alms before food and, making them (the monks) invisible by all (the inhabitants), went away."

The commentary continuing the discussion in this vein says further on: "Did the Blessed One also sojourn there for the rainy season without knowing the magical manipulation of Māra? Not without knowing this. Why did he not then proceed towards any one of Campā, Sāvatthi, Rājagaha, etc.? Let Campā, Sāvatthi, Rājagaha, etc. remain. Even if the Blessed One should have sojourned in that year for the rainy season having gone to the (mythical) North-Kuru and the Second Heaven (Tidasapur), Māra would have manipulated (through Āvaṭṭanā) these too. It is said that Māra was disturbed with

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an exceedingly inimical mood (against the Master) that year." This is obviously an exceptional case. The reason of Māra's disturbance or enmity culminating at that time in the calamity is not found anywhere. According to the commentary on the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the 12th year's Retreat was in Beranjā, that is, long after his Enlightenment. The commentator must be following the old tradition blindly, otherwise he would have given or invented a reasonable cause for the Māra complex.

Another far-fetched cause of the above circumstance is given in the 88-89th Gāthā of the 10th Apadāna of the 39th Vagga of the Apadāna in the Khuddaka Nikāya. The meaning of the two Gāthās is as follows:

"I (the Bodhisattva) reviled the disciples (dwelling) under the discipline (Pāvacana, teaching) of Phussa (Lord Phussa immediately preceding Lord Vipassi?) saying: 'Eat and feed (yourselves) on corn (yava), and don't feed on rice (sāli). By the fruition of that action (kamma), I had to eat corn for three months, when I was invited by the Brāhmaṇa and dwelt in Beranjā." These are the two Gāthās out of the thirty-three. These are said to have been a confession of the former actions (pilotika kamma) by the Master before a great assembly of the monks near the (mythical) Anotatta Lake.

The above instances would tolerably show that the internal consistency of suttas is definitely perceptible in and traceable to the nucleus or core of the Canon. This consistency on the close examination of the relevant suttas is found to be natural and not artificial. For there are many slight discrepancies in the suttas of the different Nikāyas and even in the different commentaries. This shows that there were several traditions working under Canonical literature we have at present. This is but natural; for only artificiality could have made everything look correct. For example, the age of Yasodharā was 78 at her decease, according to her own declaration before the Master in Rājagaha as found in the Theri Apadāna (3.8). Her first ten Gāthās may mean that prominent elders including two principal ones have already passed away. If so, it must be the last year of the Master. Then she should have been 80 years old, inasmuch as the Nidāna Kathā of the Jātaka says

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that the four persons including herself were born on the same day when the Bodhisattva was born.

Another instance is that of the elder Bākula (or Bakkula), the longest-lived monk. He is said to be the foremost among those monks who had little illness. The commentary on the Bākula sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (III.24) gives a mythical story of his birth. He was reared by two rich families of Kosambi and Bāraṇasi for eighty years till he sought and received the initiation and ordination in the Order. He was, according to the commentary, initiated and ordained before the Master himself in Bāraṇasi. On the eighth day of his admission, he attained arhatship. Now the text of the said sutta begins his discourse with his former friend, Acela (naked)-Kassapa. The dialogue between the two one-time friends is humorously serious. It transpires that the elder Bākula has been ordained 80 years since. So he must be then 160 years old. His friend, Acela-Kassapa, should also be of about this age.

These are the rarely long-lived persons, according to the commentary on the Mahā-padāna sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya (II.1): "Therein Visākhā, the laywoman, lives for one hundred and twenty years; so do Pokkharasāti Brāhmaṇa, Brahmāyu Brāhmaṇa, Sela Brāhmaṇa, Bāvariya Brāhmaṇa (all of them are prominent), the elder Ānanda, and the elder Mahākassapa. The elder Anuruddha however lives for one hundred and fifty years; the elder Bākula lives for one hundred and sixty years, this (monk) is the most long-lived. Even he (Bākula) also does not live for two hundred years." This is certainly a moderate view of longevity. This is of course an incomplete list of examples only. We can add others to this list. To wit, Mahāpajāpati Gotami, the foster-mother of the Bodhisattva, was, according to her own avowal in the 192nd Gāthā of the Theri Apadāna (II.7), one hundred and twenty years from the birth.

It was in Vesāli. The elders, Kondannā, Rāhula, Ānanda, Nanda, etc, were yet living. And so were the two principal disciples. But she says that she would not be able to see the Parinibbāna of the Buddha and these elders. So it appears that she foresaw the great event fast approaching. She was thinking

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of passing away in Vesāli when her five hundred companions also thought of doing the same. She along with these arhat nuns went to see and obtain formal permission from the Master. Her declared age of 120 years at her decease might help us in inferring the age of the Bodhisattva's mother at his birth. The text says that the Bodhisattva's mother must be of a well ripened age in the third state of her life (well advanced in age) to give birth to the Bodhisattva. If Mahāmāyā, 'The Mother', be eldest sister of Mahāpajāpati Gotami, her age at the Nativity of Siddhārtha cannot be less than fifty years. The commentary is definite that the age of the Mother comes to the third part of the middle age. Since the entire normal age is divided into three equal divisions and each division into three equal parts, the result for the stipulated period would range from 55 to 66 years of age. Hence her minimum age would appear to be 50 years.

The commentary of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Papancasūdani, or rather the tradition following this commentary, has actually tried to arrange the sequence of the discourses on the instruction of Rāhula, the son of Prince Siddhārtha. These are seven in number and scattered in different books of the Nikāyas. This sort of arrangement helps us not only to find out the sequential history of the suttas, but also to trace out the ladder of steps in the Master's system. From the above arrangement, the course of Rāhula, under the instruction of the Master himself, is seen to start from a primer (Khuddaka Pāṭha) on ten questions with fifty-five answers. He was then seven years old. He had been primarily entrusted for his regular instruction to the elder Sāriputta, as his teacher. But the Master seems to have taken special care for his spiritual advancement from the beginning of his initiation. The course in ascending order is the Rāhulovāda on falsehood (II.11) of the Majjhima, the Rāhula-Samyutta (II.18.1 to 10) of the Samyutta, Mahā-Rāhulovāda (II.12) of the Majjhima, and the Rāhulovāda of the Samyutta (IV.35.121) and the same of the Majjhima (III.47) Nikāya. In the meantime the Rāhulasutta (II. 11.) of the Sutta Nipāta consisting of eight gāthās was taught as a reminder for all time. Instructed thus, Rāhula

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seems to have completed his course and contemplation within the first year of his ordination as a regular monk.

Thus the sequence of the events and even the suttas of the Pāli canon gives us a feeling of confidence that we are standing on solid ground. The absence of chronological dates is however beyond replacement and will always be a hindrance to a researcher in this field. The authenticity of the text will have to be similarly derived from the consistency of the text through the evaluation of the process shown above.

Comprehension, Realization, and Verification

The Text, the Commentary, and the Buddha himself say that the full extent of the Buddha's comprehension is unfathomable, that is, practically unapproachable. This might be merely an eulogy, which can be expanded to the capacity of the Dhamma-kathika, as explained in connection with the term 'Vaṇṇa-bhūmi', above in the section 'Eulogy...' We find the same thing in 'Vaṇṇa-kāla', or the Praise-time also. The commentary on the Sekha-sutta (II. 3) of the *Majjhima Nikāya* says, on the approach of the Buddha to open the new Shākyan Council hall in Kapilavastu, and with the profusion of details, towards the end of these, as follows:

"Standing on this place (that is, arriving at this stage), it is proper to describe, in a thousand complete words or stanzas (padas), the praise of (the Buddha's) progress. Therein this is only the introductory (mukhamattam)." Then the commentator give us ten gāthās in further praise. Continuing further, he says: "This is expectedly (kira) the time of praise (Vaṇṇa-kāla). In such times as these the extent of the praise of the Buddha's body or quality depends on the capacity of the Dhamma-kathika (reciter). Either in separated words (cuṇṇiya-padehi, that is, in prose), or in composed gāthās (gāthā-bandhena, that is, in poetry), one should describe it as much as one can. But one should not state what is ill-said (dukkhathitam). For the Buddhas are (possessed) of immeasurable quality and praise; even the Buddhas are not capable (asamattha) of standing these exhaustively, let alone other people." This is certainly too much even for the versatile commentator to say.

The textual praise for the Buddha is also prolific. This is

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evident in suttas on the previous six Buddhas and even on the Pacceka-buddhas. The Buddha has also said to several disciples that the extent of his own comprehension and power is unfathomable. When pressed by his cousin and attendant disciple, Ānanda, for the extent of his (the Buddha's specific) power, the Buddha, in the Cūlanikā sutta (3.8.10) of the Anguttara Nikāya, says: "If Tathāgata wishes so Ānanda! he can intimate three thousandfold and great thousandfold world element (Loka-dhatu) by means of his voice, or as far as he wishes." This statement was incomprehensible or indigestible even to his attendant. So Ānanda had to put a supplementary question to the Buddha and asked: "How and in what manner, Bhante! the Blessed One would intimate...?"

Thereupon the Buddha explained to him the method which he could have understood by analogy with the meditative light. The Buddha said: "Herein Ānanda! Tathāgata would diffuse the three thousandfold and great thousandfold world element with Obhasa (meditative light). When those beings (of this) extensive world element) came to perceive it (Obhasa), then Tathāgata would make sound and let (them) hear (his) words." This is mystifying itself and still more when the commentary explains it correctly that three thousandfold means nine zeroes after one (one billion), while great (Maha) thousandfold may come to twelve zeroes after one (one thousand billion). This would really be a test for our tolerance with the text and the factors contributing to it. This was how the Master explained to Ānanda that the Tathāgata was appameyya (immeasurable).

Nevertheless we are not to be deterred by anything like the textual or commentatorial exuberance in eulogistic matters. For the poverty of imagination would have also infuriated us. The need of such matters as these must have been felt soon after the emergence of such a human figure as the Buddha claiming a higher position than any ever held by beings inhabiting regions known and unknown. There must be something in the Buddha we are not fully aware of that might have inspired him to claim the position. This something is certainly not material. For he had discarded the allurement of universal sovereignty offered him by the mystical visitor, the so-called mythical Māra, before and even after the Great Enlightenment.

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The offer is voiced in the Nidāna Kathā and the Lalita-vistara before, and in the Rajja sutta of the Māra-samyutta (I.4.20) after it. We cannot ascribe the offer to the mere wishful thinking of a person whose critical acumen could and can scarcely be surpassed then and even now by anyone of his fellow-beings.

Thus the best way to understand him and his system, doctrine, or philosophy might probably appear to us to try to comprehend how he got the ways and means for achieving the mental stability and its potentialities which the text and the commentary call briefly but technically Enlightenment (Sambodhi) and Omniscience (Sabbannuta-nāṇa). We are not speaking of any yāna (vehicle, that is, ideal way) complex. The question will come up before us only when we have comprehended him and his system pretty well. It is not very difficult to do so. A perusal of his autobiography as found in the few suttas of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, such as Mahāsaccaka (I.36), Bodhirājakumāra (II.35.), and Saṅgārava (II.50), will be enough to convince us that we have to deal with the story of a human being therein. This practical approach is also in consonance with the sentiment expressed in the seventh chapter of the Lalita-vistara, the Janma (Birth) Parivarta (chapter). The relevant portion is as follows:

"And dwelling in the womb, and with compassion for beings, Bodhisattva is born in the region of men, nor as a Divine Being does he propagate the Wheel of Dhamma (Dhamma-cakra). Why so? (It is the wish:) May the people, Ānanda! (the Buddha is speaking to Ānanda), not get slothfulness, (thinking thus:) 'A Divine being is he, Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhan, Samyak-Sambuddha. We are but human beings. We are not competent to accomplish that task (sthāna, post).' They (thinking thus) might get slothful." This shows how the authorities of Buddhism are keenly aware of their anomalous position. They know that the Buddha is a man, but they want to preach his divine qualities from the very beginning of his resolve as a Bodhisattva. This may look anomalous to us. But once the element of divinity is introduced in the system, any anomaly is brushed off the system. Under these circumstances the autobiography referred to above will look most significant for our adopting a practical and

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human approach towards the Shākya Prince, Siddhārtha, Bodhisattva, and finally the Buddha.

Thus understood, the account of the Master and his system would be easy reading for us. We would be able to follow him throughout the early life he must have led. Fortunately we find him in his homeland till he was a mature youth of twenty-nine. The little real-looking account we get of his life during this period is not from the legendary account, but from the reported criticism of the youth from his own relatives. The aristocratic environment of his homeland could not have been an attractive one for his turn of mind. However flourishing the Shākya country might have been in his time, it was under the suzerainty of the King of Kosala, as the text itself (Digha. III.4) shows. This state of subordination to the adjacent country ruled by one having lower social status than that of the Shākyas must have been unpleasant to them, as the consequence of the later unfortunate incident of the controversial massacre shows.

The harem of the Prince appears to be unrealistically depicted. For the harem of the King of Kosala and that of the King of Magadha were limited to a much lower number than that attributed to our Prince. Moreover, a man of his nature could not be imagined to agree to the proposal of keeping a fabulous harem. Against the tradition of the harem, the Bhadrakalpavadāna, available in Newāri version, goes so far as to say that the Bodhisattva did not indulge in sexual intercourse even with his wife. She had however become pregnant by his appropriate touch. This originated an episode described in the above work. This harem is however, brought again into our view, as described in 172 gāthās from No. 314 to No. 485 in the Theri Apadāna (3 8, 9, 10.). Many thousands of the harem inmates had been initiated and ordained in the Order of Nuns. They had been all successful nuns a fortnight after their ordination. These nuns also had accompanied Yasodharā, when she had come up before the Master in Rājagaha to seek permission for passing away from him. And these nuns also sought permission for the same from the Master. When and where the traditions differ, only then can we discriminate between them.

The period of his activities in his household life is uncomfortably overclouded with legendary accounts, which do not help

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us to arrive at a working hypothesis for our conjecture that he must have developed in body, mind, and intellect through the natural process as most of us do. Such a conjecture as this is obviously necessary for us, who are in search of his system of meditation and intellectual insight. The text is wherein we may hope to find the original matter in spite of the overgrowth we have already discussed above. Although there are different layers in the text itself, these layers are so connected with one another that we cannot exclude one from the other arbitrarily. Such exclusion would give us much more trouble in the choice of useful matters than their tentative acceptance would do. For example, the twin miracles, said to have been performed by the Buddha on several occasions, have been established as a classical one in the commentatorial literature. Its exclusion would necessitate other exclusions with matters which can be of much importance for our objective in view.

A close study of authentic matters, available in the extant text and the relevant commentary laboriously provided in this project of our Research, would at any rate convince the reader of the fact that our Bodhisattva is just like one of us. Whatever he did in his pursuit of meditative enterprise throughout his early and later life could and can be interpreted in terms o human endeavour and aspirations. This attitude of our mind would prepare us for making a trial of his method of meditation and its potentialities. This sort of attitude is in true conformity with the Master's own precept to the Brāhmaṇa householders of Sālā, a Brāhmaṇa village in the Kosala country, as described in the Appaṇaka sutta (II.10) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The situation of the village and its inhabitants as we find in its commentary nearly corresponds to that of our own modern world in miniature today.

The commentary says: "That village, it is said, was situated in front of the woods. Diverse kinds of Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas (savants) tramping along the road in the daytime used to seek in that village a (night's) shelter in the evening. These men used to give them (the travellers) proper drinks etc., and then the next day alms. They being pleased used to say so: 'Is there any doctrine, householders! held by you? No, none, Bhante! (Sir!). 'Householders! without (following) a doctrine the world

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(Loka) is not crossed over. Choosing a doctrine you should... after confessing (your heresy) accept it (the doctrine). These savants teach them their own particular doctrine and go away. When others come up another day, they also ask them the same question. The village people tell them what had happened. Then the travelling savants belittling the previous ones say: "What do those fools (Bālā) know?" And teaching them their own doctrine, these travellers also go away. In this way they used to be taught by these travelling monks and savants all the sixty-two doctrines one by one as described in many suttas. The village people however could not hold fast to any of the doctrines.

"In the last batch, the Master had gone there," says the commentary; but how did the commentator know it? At any rate the sutta describes how the Buddha also asked them the same question and received a similar answer from them. Thereupon the Master explained to them the way of apaṇṇaka (indubitable) choice. In substance, this sort of choice between two contradictory ways propounded in this sutta by the Master can be said to be truly classic. "Is there any formless trance?" This would be our general question. To this, in short, the Master argues thus: "Some...say: 'There is no Āruppā (formless trance and region) at all'. Some.. say: 'There is Āruppā, to be sure!' These are truly contradictory. But if you listen to the opponents of the Āruppā and still try to organize it, you may (at worst) get the form trance and be born likewise in the form region (Rupavacara Brahmaloka), instead of what you hoped. If you listen to the proponents of the Āruppā and accordingly try to organize it, you will get the formless trance and also the formless region. There is truly the formless trance and the formless region, which is calmer and quieter than the form trance and form region." This is the line of their argument.

So the real test of any precept on meditation, trance, and insight will be the realization we obtain. A trial is necessary; if the trial is successful, we shall get what the Master obtained; if we fail, then and then only can we denounce it, at the worst, as Sunakkatta the Licchavi-putta did, when he could not obtain the divine ear (hearing) after obtaining the divine eye (seeing) as described in the Mahāli sutta (I.6.) of the Digha. Before this,

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our opinion on this subject will be merely a meaningless talk. For the subject is meditation and its potentialities are said to have been organized, obtained, and channelled into diverse fields of power and knowledge by the Buddha, his disciples both monks and nuns, and others. Thus the comprehension of the Buddha and his system should directly lead us to an attempt at a sort of practice for the realization of what he did and said on this subject.

Now there will remain the verification of what is obtained. For the realization of meditation, trance, and meditative power is obviously the subjective one. Objective verification would entail some outward evidence of these subjective phenomena. We find instances of this tendency of seeking objective verification of subjective phenomena in the Master himself. Whenever he heard some physical sound or word on significant occasions, through his divine ear, he repeated the word to the persons concerned and asked them whether or not it was so. His subtle journey to diverse subtle regions on many occasions appears to be due to a similar tendency of verification in him. On occasions when a new, novel or unprecedented thought occurred to him, he tried to verify it at its source, or cause.

In our case, the state of meditation is certainly a subjective one. As such we cannot verify it objectively. It is only perceptible to another mind absorbed in a similar or higher state of concentration. If externalized through long practice, the meditative halo might be detected, observed, or felt even by common persons not themselves in meditation at the moment. Any feat of psychic power is subject to verification, if it refers to an external object. It should not be for the purpose of ostentation or exhibition, but for the sole purpose of evaluating one's own stage of attainment. The verification of diverse states of liberation entirely from the meditative point of view also is imperative, if one is intent upon discovering for oneself the state one is habitually or occasionally in. We are not discussing any complex of philosophy as regards liberation, salvation, or union with divinity. We are concerned with the potentialities of meditation only. The insight gained through the purification of meditation will be naturally directed towards what is generally understood as liberation from all sorts of limitations.

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Lastly we come to liberated persons. These revered persons are ever worthy of our profound reverence. With respect to their attainment of the knowledge of liberation, they may be classified as the Sāvakas, or disciples of the Buddha, the Pacceka-buddhas, and the Buddhas. In the light of pure liberation, no one of them is lower or higher than the rest. As the discoverer of the way to liberation there is no fundamental difference between the last two categories, Pacceka-buddhas and the Buddha or Buddhas. It is only with regard to omniscience that the Buddha is the greatest of them. But the status of omniscience as compared to that of the attainment of liberation is probably of little account or no value. There are obviously some complications in allowing the presence of Pacceka-buddhas during the time of the Buddha; hence they are unaccountably removed from the face of the earth as soon as any Buddha is about to appear in the world, so say the authorities. Nevertheless the Pacceka-buddhas are highly praised by the Master in the Isigili sutta (III.16) of the Majjhima.

The multiplicity of Buddhas is the most incomprehensible problem in Buddhism. For, apart from commentatorial versions, even simple logic would show that the number of Buddhas would go on increasing backwards, if a bodhisattva has to be declared as a would-be Buddha by (more or less than) twenty-four preceding Buddhas. For example, Dipaṅkara, the 24th Buddha backwards from our Buddha, declared our Bodhisattva Siddhārtha as a would-be Buddha now. Then another 24th one backwards therefrom or the 48th from our Buddha would be necessary to declare him (Dipaṅkara) as a future (in the past) Buddha Dipaṅkara. Thus the number of Buddhas backwards would go on increasing interminably. For the past is beginningless or unfathomable (Anamatagga), according to Buddhism. An original research and thinking would be therefore necessary to deal with this problem fully and convincingly.

Then the greatest difficulty would arise in the positive conception of Nibbāna. No one ever took it in a negative sense in the meditative purview. Even in philosophy it was never finalized as a state of total extinction, it has also survived in a number of idealist conceptions.

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Original Source and Pali Canon

The original source of Buddhism should have been a sort of manuscript kept in Kosala, Vesāli, and Magadha. It is a matter for regret that even in the land of the birth of Siddhārtha no manuscript of early Buddhism has been discovered so far. We do not know for certain whether the language of the Master's preaching was Pāli or some other language spoken among the Shākyas in his homeland. He must have been habituated in the Shākyan dialect at least during the twenty-nine years of his life in this land. Leaving his country, he is said to have passed six years in austerities. It is unthinkable that he should have devoted himself to learning a new language or dialect during these six years. For he was in quest of 'what is good?' and not in inquisitiveness about different dialects and languages. After his Enlightenment he was however performing the role of a spiritual teacher. He could not have then been trying to preach in a dialect foreign to him.

Those who came to listen to his precept from the countries all round his retreat, sojourn, or stay must have understood him in his own dialect (Sakāya Niruttiyā). The two brothers, Yamelu-Tekulā (Yamela-Kekutā, or Meṭṭha-Kokuṭṭhā, or Yamela-Tekullā), as reported in the Culla-vagga (5. 16) of the Vinaya, appear to have referred to the Master's language, by the phrase 'own dialect'. For, to them his dialect might have appeared as coarse and incorrect compared to the Vedic language. Buddhaghoṣa is correct when he interprets the phrase in his commentary as the Magadhan practice (dialect) used by the Sammāsambuddha. By Magadha, Buddhaghosa probably means a middle country where the Buddha was born. As otherwise the Master would not have soundly reprimanded the two well meaning brothers. To remove the doubt of other disciples, he had to promulgate the rule that the word of the Buddha should be learnt in his own language (Sakāya Niruttiyā) The difference between the word of the Buddha and his own language is only the play on the word; it is virtually the same.

The above incident and rule show that the language of the Buddha was not Sanskrit at least in his preaching. None in

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his audience ever complained that he or she could not understand his language. This shows that the Master's dialect was fairly understood by the people of all the neighbouring countries. When Sanskrit is eliminated as his preaching language, there remain the few dialects, such as Shākyan, Kosalan, Vajjian, Magadhan, and Taxilan. We have no adequate specimen of dialects other than Jain Prākrit and Pāli Prākrit. Since we have a vast literature in Pāli, we have no other way than this beautiful and well-polished language called Pāli, Magadhi, or Saka Nirutti, to be regarded as the Buddha's own medium of instruction.

The exquisite formula of his worship or adoration, "Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa!" is certainly in Pāli and speaks eloquently in its favour. Moreover, the Canon in Pāli is obviously full of early matters not to be met with so easily in Sanskrit Canon. The Pāli text and commentary can be easily translated into any language of the world. When however doubts arise regarding the import of some important or critical word, sentence, or passage, no translation of the relative text should be wholly depended upon. The text is therefore always a short-cut to the unravelling of the hidden meaning. Even the dependence on the commentary is sometimes disappointing. Really speaking, the habit of consulting the commentary on each and every point indirectly makes us tradition-minded and thus deprives us of the initiative so necessary for any research in the meditative domain.

Nevertheless the commentary is very useful where it is informative of the circumstances, under which the sutta was delivered and the effect it produced. Thus our original matter is available in the Pāli Canon, with which we can tally other materials obtained from other sources. It is to be well kept in mind that the Pāli source is also not free from the blemishes we imagine or find in other sources. Hence a critical approach to scriptures in general and eulogistical matters in particular should never be halted in these enterprises. Now the Pāli Canon has a long history and goes as far back as the first year of the Master's demise in the Sāl grove of Kusinārā in the Malla country. It is said, in a number of suttas, Khandhaka accounts, and commentary Nidānas that a council of five

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hundred qualified monks was held in Rājagaha for the compilation of the authentic recension of the Buddhist Canon comprising the Dhamma and the Vinaya.

This first recension was revised a century later in Vesāli, where a Second Council of seven hundred qualified monks is said to have been held. A Third Council of one thousand qualified and orthodox monks is said to have been held in Pāṭaliputta in the reign of King Aśoka. The leader of the mission to the Island of Tambapanni (Sri Lanka) was Mahinda, the king's own son, who is said to have reached the Island in the year 236 A.P. So the Third Council might have met, if it met it all, near about 234 A.P. For it sat for nine months and Mahinda was delayed for seven months more. In this council Moggaliputta composed the Kathāvatthu, a Book of Controversy which is also the fifth book of the Abhidhamma. Although of a much later origin, this book is very useful for discriminating the orthodox points from the others in Buddhism.

It is said that there were two or more councils of monks in the Island, one during the time of Mahinda under his disciple, Ariṭṭha, the second in the reign of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya. It was in the reign of the latter (Vattagāmaṇi), about 440 A.P. (After Parinibbāna), that the Pāli Tipitaka with Sinhalese commentary was written down in Sinhalese script. This was certainly a monumental work, the credit for which goes to the Sangha and the fair name of Sri Lanka. Another work of much importance was also executed here. It was the Pāli translation of the Sinhalese commentary accomplished by the erudite savant Buddhaghosa, who also wrote an independent work based on the original commentaries brought here by Mahinda. The year of this savant's visit to this Island is said to have been 500 years after the writing down of the Canon, that is, 940 A.P., during the reign of Mahānāma, King of the Island. The Sixth Council of the (Burmese) Formal Recension of the Canon was held and accomplished on the occasion of the 2500th Anniversary of the Buddha's Parinibbāna, 2500 A.P. or in 1956 A.D., in Burma.

There are said to have been, besides these, several other important councils in India, Burma, Ceylon, and Thailand. The first indication of the freedom of conscience in the order

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of monks was seen or shown soon after the First Council had concluded its recension in Rājagaha. The Porāṇa-tthera-vatthu (Culla-vagga, 11.7) of the Vinaya says: "At that time (of the session of the Council), the elder Purāṇa was on a begging tour (Cārikā) in the Dakkhiṇā-giri (the southern hills near Rājagaha) with a large number of monks (that is) five hundred monks.....Then he approached the elders in Rājagaha...The elder monks said to the elder Purāṇa: 'By the elders, Friend Purāṇa! Dhamma and Vinaya have been revised. Come (that is, conform) to the recension.' (He said:) 'Well revised, Friends Dhamma and Vinaya, by the elders. But I shall keep to (follow) whatever I have heard and learnt from the Blessed One himself face to face." This is obviously a polite way of saying that I shall follow my own conscience and you follow your own. This is probably unfavourable to the Sangha's collective life and discipline. No step was seemingly taken against him, but he was totally ignored in other Pāli texts and commentary.

One hundred years after the First Council, the Vajjian monks showed some freedom in seemingly minor rules of discipline, called 'Ten Things'. This indiscipline was detected by a roving orthodox monk, who took them to task. The result was the Second Council. The dissident monks were expelled from the orthodox Saṅgha who are said to have convened a large congregation of monks, called the Great Council (Manasangīti), in Vesāli. Even thereafter, in the Third Council, the expelled monks must have formed their own separate organization and revised the text to suit their own creed and discipline (Ācariyavāda, Āciṇṇakappa). But we have no definite record. If the preceptor of King Asoka be Upagupta, instead of or in addition to Moggaliputta Tissa, then we shall have to listen to a rich literature in Sanskrit also. The legend about Asoka is very rich in Sanskrit.

King Milinda of Sāgala, under his preceptor, Nāgasena, might be fairly expected to have fostered the cause of Buddhism. With the spread of Buddhism, the need for a common code and doctrine must have been felt keenly. This is the reason why successive Councils were held to revise the Dhamma and Vinaya of early Buddhism. The Book of Milinda's Question,

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Milinda-Pāñha is fully recognized and quoted in Buddhaghosa's work. But it has unfortunately little to tell us about meditation. We hear of the Buddhist Council under the patronage of King Kaniṣka, a few centuries later. The language of the Buddhist Canon and commentary became Sanskrit. These books are not yet available in the original to such an extent as to enable us to compare these with those of Pāli books on the subject we are interested in.

At present we have a complete set of Pāli Tipiṭaka in several scripts and to some extent the commentary also. Pāli is a very simple but classical language. It is declined and inflected like other classical languages; but these forms are very few and easily understood. There is no dual form for nouns, pronouns, and adjectives; so also for finite verbs; many words are indeclinable and used without any change of form. Order of words in a sentence is natural. Anyone may learn it within six months and be able to read and understand the ordinary passages excepting technical terms. The frequent repetition of sentences and passages makes the sutta look long and at the same time its reading facile. This information is intended to show that a taste for original will save one from confusion arising mostly from different versions and translations even of a simple passage in Pāli.

The Pāli Canon is divided into three Piṭakas, baskets, or collections. They are Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma, or Discourse, Discipline, and Classification respectively. The suttas are arranged into four Nikāyas or Āgamas meaning traditional compilations, and one Khuddaka or Miscellaneous Nikāya consisting of fifteen separate books. The four Nikāyas are Dīgha (Long), Majjhima (Middle), Samyutta (Connected), and Aṅguttara (Consecutive). These four Nikāyas have their own specialities the first one gives us long discourses numbering 34 suttas; these suttas are entered into three vaggas or volumes; thus in each of the three volumes the numbers of suttas are I.13, II.10, III.11, or altogether 34 suttas. The Maha-sati-paṭṭhāna (II.9) sutta teaches the fundamentals of meditation. The Mahā-parinibbāna (II.3) sutta is an account of the last days of the Master.

The second Nikāya gives us in three volumes 152 suttas

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of medium or middle length, shorter than those of first but longer than those of the remaining two Nikāyas. The category of length is however misleading. This Nikāya is alone competent to give us the main principles of the Master's system of meditation and thinking. Since this compilation has neither longer nor shorter suttas, we may postulate that this must be the original arrangement and not borrowed from other Nikāyas. The autobiographical accounts of the Master are entirely found in this Nikāya, viz. I.36; II.35 and II.50. and even I.4 and I.26. For the practice of meditation, we find I.10., III.18 and III.19 suttas very useful. The importance of this *Majjhima Nikāya* might be seen also in the pains taken by the ancient elders (Porāṇā) in counting the 'padas' (complete words or quarter śloka-equivalents) and 'akkharas' (syllables or letters) of this Nikāya.

The third Nikāya gives us, in five vaggas and fifty-six samyuttas, 7762 suttas according to the commentary but actually 2941 suttas in printed books. The discrepancy between the two numbers is probably due to the coalescence of slightly identical suttas in the latter. This Nikāya's fifty-six samyuttas are as many headings or main subjects. Each of them gives connected suttas, ranging from 10 to 248 in number. The Māra Samyutta (I.4) consisting of 25 suttas may be closely studied to determine whether this mythical being is merely a mental creation or a real but mystical identity. The last (25th) sutta, 'Māra-dhītu', or Daughters of Māra, gives us an attractive depiction of these girls' alluring activities. A dramatic description of these personified Deceivers is, however, found in the middle portion of the 21st chapter of the *Lalita-vistara*. This is, in short, as follows:

These Deceivers, the Daughters of Māra, are sent to the Bodhisattva. They approach him; they display thirty-two varieties of female allurement; they try to know his intention. Then they regard the face and body of the Bodhisattva and find it pure, brilliant..... 'Cakravālam iva adhyud-gatam guptendriyam' (untranslatable). A dramatic dialogue issues between them and the Bodhisattva. Failing in their attempt at seducing him, they fell at his feet and wished him all success in his endeavour. They come back to their father and report to him their

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finding about the Bodhisattva. Thereupon Māra says to them: "How could you not make him rise from the Bodhi-maṇḍa (seat)? Was he surely not a moron (mūḍha) or a fool not to regard (your) form and appearance?" They gave him a vivid report of the Bodhisattva: "He speaks soft and sweet, but is not attached; he regards the 'guru guhya' (untranslatable) but is not affected; he watches the movement and activity (of us), but is not befooled (thereby)..." This adds more colour to the picture.

The fourth Nikāya is planned on consecutive items of Dhamma from one to eleven, each of them called Nipāta. This Nikāya is said, according to the commentary, to consist of 9557 suttas; but by coalescence of identical suttas, the number of suttas is reduced to 2308 suttas only. In the first two Nipātas there are 1372 suttas, but these are very short. In the rest the suttas are of varying lengths, some short and some comparatively long, while the Uposatha sutta (III.7.10) consisting of nine pages without any sub-sections may be taken as the longest sutta in this Nikāya. The Etadagga-vagga (I.14) gives us the names of eighty principal or foremost (agga) disciples, monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, in as many short sentences or suttas. The commentary on this Nikāya extensively dwells on the biographical stories of these personages. The Mahā-supina sutta (V.20.6) describes the five great dreams seen by the Bodhisattva before his enlightenment. This dream is only mentioned in the Nidāna-kathā of the Jātaka. Moreover we find the record of several rare persons not generally met with in other places; for example, the moral integrity of Ugga the householder (Vesālika VIII.3.1, Hatthi-gāmaka, Do. 2.) and the high achievement of Monk Saddha, the son of Sudatta, Anātha-piṇḍika (Subhuti sutta, XI.2.4).

The fifth Nikāya, besides its fifteen books, is said to include the Vinaya and Abhidhamma also. Practically speaking, the Tipiṭaka in three divisions is the Buddhist Canon, viz. the Vinaya consisting of five works, the Suttanta or Sutta of five Nikāyas, and the Abhidhamma containing seven works. The Vinaya contains some important suttas, but the great bulk of it concerns itself with the rules of the Order and the circumstances under which rules were promulgated. Consequent-

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ly the clergy appears to give greater importance to it than the other two Piṭakas. Buddhaghosa, in writing his work, the Visuddhi-magga, bases it on the foundation of the Sīla, or moral code, which is basically the Vinaya. The Abhidhamma is the systematic classification of Dhammas, and not a system of philosophy, as one would have expected. Real Buddhist philosophy is scattered throughout the Sutta Piṭaka. If we try to collect these pieces therefrom, we can present a book on Buddhist philosophy tolerably understandable by all.

There remains the Suttanta or the Sutta Piṭaka. This will always supply us with an immense store of rich materials for any research on Buddhism for all time to come. The Vinaya will give us great help in determining the meaning, import, intention, and purpose of many obscure or dubious words, phrases, sentences, and even passages met with in the Sutta. The Adhidhamma has been obviously composed with stupendous labour and acumen. If anyone ever tries to write a book on Buddhism, he must be careful of the check the Abhidhamma might apply on the content of the book. Anything found defective in the book through the Abhidhamma might be stigmatized as un-Buddhist and thereby the whole book might fall into suspicion. It is for this reason that it is much easier to translate a book in the original than to write an independent work even if based on the original. For the Abhidhamma is not an independent work, so to say; but it is a development of successive classifications of the Dhammas found in the Sutta Piṭaka. Any divergence from the Abhidhamma might land the author of a new book into committing a contradiction of the suttas themselves.

The commentary at least of the first two Nikāyas, the four Pārājikas, and the Dhammasaṅgaṇi with the Kathāvatthu would give one a fair idea of the commentatorial literature in the original. There are, however, four commentarieson the first four Pāli Nikāyas. The commentary on the Dhammapada also makes very pleasant reading. The textual commentary on some of the suttas of the Sutta-nipāta is available in the Niddesa, the 11th book of the Khuddaka Nikāya. The original Jātaka is partly incomprehensible without the Jātaka commentary. The circumstance or occasion of each Atīta-vatthu,

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which is the Jātaka story proper, is very useful. The Jātaka story proper is the main story. The concluding portion of each story is where we find the application of the past actors of the story with those of the Master's time including the Master himself. This portion called the Samodhāna is not found in the original text. So we are not textually bound to accept them, so far as the Master's identification with the past actor is concerned. The story proper also has in many places no connection with this last portion.

The commentary on the Vinaya, named the Samanta-pāsādikā, is very useful not only to know what the vinaya means by its numerous rules, but also the meaning of several suttas in the Sutta Piṭaka. The commentary on the first two books of the Abhidhamma is worth studying; so is the introductory part of the commentary of the last book, the Paṭṭhana, of the Abhidhamma. The occasional reference to this last book and its commentary is very useful in removing doubts in the Doctrine.

Calculation of Pali Textual and Commentatorial Works

The calculation of Pāli works is slightly different from that of Sanskrit works. It is very interesting. In Sanskrit the Purāṇas are calculated by the standard of a verse called 'Anuṣṭubh,' a generally used stanza of four lines, each consisting of eight syllables. The leaves of a book were used to be of varying sizes in the old times; so the savants of those times calculated their works in so many thousands of verses as compared to the general type of thirty-two syllabled stanza termed 'Anuṣṭubh' or merely 'Śloka.' In Pāli we find a general term of a greater extent called the 'Bhāṇavāra' (a period of recitation). From the introductory mention of this calculation in the initial page of the commentary of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Nidāna Kathā* of the commentary of the *Dhamma-saṇgaṇi*, we learn the following particulars about the term and its calculation:

The first mention is this: "Therein the Majjhima Saṇgīti (Āgama, Nikāya) . . . is in pada (Pāda in Sanskrit, or a quarter) eighty thousand, five hundred, and twenty-three (80523). Hence ancient elders (Porāṇa) have said: (a verse giving the same

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number). In Akkhara (letter) it is 740053 akkharas. In Bhāṇavāra it is eighty and a half Bhāṇavara and twenty-three Padas (80.523 Bhāṇavāras)." This mention gives us the number of one thousand padas for a Bhāṇavāra. And the latter number (740053) divided by the former number (80523) gives us about 9.1906 akkharas on the average for a pada. A pāda in a Sanskrit śloka would exactly contain eight syllables (Akṣara or Varṇa). From the second mention in the above *Nidāna Kathā*, we learn that fifteen gāthā sahassāni and sixty padas sahassāni are seemingly equivalent, so that one gāthā and four padas (pādas in Sanskrit) are equivalent. Thus one Bhāṇavāra, containing one thousand padas, would also be equal to two hundred and fifty (250) gāthās (or ślokas). Although there are many compound words in Pāli, there are also many short words; the average number of syllables or letters in a word in Pāli is between three and four.

The counting of gāthās is much easier; but when the suttas are to be counted in the scale of gāthās, it is not so easy. Either words will have to be counted, or letters in groups of quarters of gāthās or ślokas. We do not find the Bhāṇavāra mentioned or printed in most textual books. Out of the first four Nikāyas, only the Dīgha in some special suttas has the Bhāṇavāra mentioned and printed at one end. In the Vinaya, only the Mahā-vagga similarly mentions and has the Bhāṇavāra printed at one end. In the Abhidhamma we do not find the term mentioned and printed in any of its books excepting the 5th. In the fifth or Khuddaka Nikāya, the 6th, 7th, and 13th books, or Vimāna-vatthu, Peta-vatthu, Apadāna (both Thera and Theri), respectively, have the Bhāṇavāra mentioned and printed at one end throughout these books. The 12th book, *Paṭisambhida-magga*, mentions only five Bhāṇavāras.

Strangely enough, only once like the *Kathāvatthu*, the fifth book, the *Sutta-nipāta*, of the Khuddaka Nikāya records at the end 'In the Pāli (text) of the measure (Parimāṇa) of eight Bhāṇavāras.' In spite of the sections and sub-sections present in the books of the text, the well-measured period of Bhāṇavāras was and is also necessary for us to check any interpolation in the body of the text after the so-called Council of Recensions of the Canon. The disappearance of the Bhāṇavāras

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from most of the books of the text shows some sort of re-arrangement and even manipulation of the text in later times, though we cannot say when and where. We have a definite record that the fifth book, the *Kathā-vatthu*, of the *Abhidhamma* was much reduced before the time of Buddhaghosa, at the latest. For he says in the commentary on the first book of the *Abhidhamma*, the *Aṭṭhasālini*, as follows:

"Nidāna-kathā . . . After this there comes the Kathā-vatthu Pakaranam (that is, Kathā-vatthu itself) . . . Not taking it (this book) in the way of recitation (Vācanā-maggato) as it is (that is, as we find it) written in the book, but (it is to be taken) as given in the way of the Saṅgīti (Council) as equal to the measure of the Dīgha Nikāya . . . " The Dīgha Nikāya is given as much as sixty-four (64) Bhāṇavāras, and the Kathā-vatthu also should have been of sixty-four Bhāṇavāras as specified in the Council (probably the very same third). At present, ostensibly as Buddhaghosa had found it, the Kathā-vatthu has at the end the words, 'Thirty-five Bhāṇavāras,' about five-eleventh of the original work. Buddhaghosa or the commentator of the said commentary might also have been puzzled and could have got or found no explanation for the reduction of the original sixty-five by twenty-nine Bhāṇavāras.

It is accepted in the commentary that the original Kathā-vatthu "has dealt with the five hundred suttas in his own doctrine (Saka-vāda) and five hundred suttas in others' doctrine (Para-vāda)." But the current work of the *Kathā-vatthu* has four and a half Paṇṇāsakas (Fifties); the first (Mahā-paṇṇāsaka) contains 53 kathās or suttas, the second also 53, the third 50, the fourth 46 only, but the sum of these four Fifties comes to 200 kathās or suttas. The last one called the khuddaka has 27 or about half of fifty. Thus the total becomes 227 only, not the required number of 500, so that 223 kathās are missing. The missing ones could not have been really lost, but expunged from the work—when and where we do not know. The cause of doing so might have been something like the discountenance of the later authorities. For a single refutation in this book is enough to upset any pet theory and practice in Buddhist ideology. The commentary on the Digha in the Saṅgāyana says: "The speech of Sāvakas or Devas . . . . removable . . . were

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removed by the elders of the Council." A suitable precedent indeed!

To resume the subject of calculating the size or extent of the works of the Canon or Commentary, a convenient method would be the measure of Bhāṇavāra consisting of 250 gāthās, or one thousand padas (quarter of gāthās). In the Apadāna (both Thera and Theri), wherein only gāthās are found, the counting of and by the padas (quarters) might have been quite regular and easy. But we find in all these thirty-two Bhāṇavāras containing 7892 gāthās in all, not a regular system of assigning Bhāṇavāras at the end of each period. The range of gāthās is from 212 to 274 for each Bhāṇavāra. The gāthās are almost all of regular length, each gāthā containing thirty-two syllables or letters. Since the last Bhāṇavāra is not complete, the average number of gāthās for each Bhāṇavāra comes almost to the required number, that is, 250. It appears that some re-arrangements or even interpolations were made within the Bhāṇavāras; we cannot say where and when; but such things as these might have occurred; for we find some clear examples in the above Apadāna as follows:

At the end of each vagga of ten apadānas, the contents and the number of gāthās are mentioned in verse called the Uddāna. After ten vaggas, a comprehensive content, that is, the Vagga-uddāna, is also given with the total number of gāthās in the 100 apadānas also in verse. Obviously the total number of gāthās so given should tally with the sum of the separate uddānas. In the first hundred upadānas beginning from the Buddha, the separate vaggas give a sum of 1583 gāthās; there are actually 1603 gāthās; but the vagga-uddāna says that there is a total of 1455 gāthās in these hundred apadānas. By Bhāṇavāras, these gāthās are given as six Bhāṇavāras plus 173 gāthās upto that end.

Considering these difficulties in the gāthās, we are still at a loss to know how the counting was, or might have been, done in prose. From the instance of the counts of the text of the *Majjhima Nikāya* given in its commentary and cited above, we learn that the count of padas (or pādas, quarters) in the text was not uniform so far as, or with reference to, the number of letters is concerned; for one 'pada' was on an average equal

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to about nine and a fraction of letters. Each 'pada' however could be counted approximately by periodic cadence, while reading or reciting the text for the purpose of counting 'padas'. When the padas are so counted up, the Bhāṇavāras could be easily calculated; for one Bhāṇavāra is made up of one thousand padas (quarters). Then the letters in the Bhāṇavāra will have to be counted one by one.

We are, however, habituated to estimate the extent of a work by the number of pages or words it contains. Hence one Bhāṇavāra consisting of one thousand padas (or pādas, quarters) would be equivalent to two hundred and fifty gāthās or ślokas. On an average a gāthā or śloka is found to contain ten words; so one Bhāṇavāra may be taken as roughly equivalent to twenty-five hundred words (2500 words), so far as the gāthās are concerned. By an analogy of the counting of ślokas in Sanskrit, we have to bear in mind that the Pāli gāthās of greater length than the regular ones consisting of thirty-two letters in four padas will be measured by the standard of a regular gāthā. For example, 8 gāthās, each of 44 letters, will be counted as 11 gāthās of regular length (each of 32 letters). Similarly the gāthās of an irregular number of lines will also be measured by the regular number of lines, that is, one gāthā of four padas or quarters.

In prose, however, the case would be slightly different in Pāli. The data, given in the beginning of the commentary of the Majjhima and cited above, would show that the letters in a Bhāṇavāra would number, on an average, 9190 instead of 8000. This discrepancy is probably due to a method of approximate counting by pada-equivalents in prose. The process might have been to count the approximate padas first by periodic cadence; when the count of one thousand padas was completed, then the letters or syllables might have been counted; this method would in reality be preferable to its reverse for the clergy. Thus the prose-pada or prose-quarter in Pāli would correspond to our phrase of approximately regular cadence.

Generally, a gāthā contains less compound words than a prose sentence does. Hence one Bhāṇavāra, either in poetry (gāthā) or in prose, may contain the same number of padas, say 1000; or of words, say 2500; but a different number of letters

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in them would be as given above. So both in poetry and in prose, we may take one Bhāṇavāra roughly as equivalent to twenty-five hundred Pāli words. This estimate would be helpful in calculating the number of syllables or letters in Pāli as well; in poetry it is eight thousand, while in prose it is about nine thousand and two hundred. In printed books, the number of pages would depend on size and other factors; but the printed books in Roman, Burmese, and Devanāgari (Hindi) scripts show in poetry an average of sixteen Bhāṇavāras of the Apadāna Vol. I, that one Bhāṇavāra in poetry covers 21 pages in Roman, 24 and a half pages in Burmese, and 26 pages in Devanāgari. This difference in excess number is due to the big margin allowed for the lines of the gāthās. In prose, the average of the whole of the *Majjhima Nikāya* of eighty and a half Bhāṇavāras, we have 13.5 pages in Roman, 15 pages in Burmese, and 16.3 pages in Devanāgari for one Bhāṇavāra in prose.

Quantitative Estimate of Pāli Text and Commentary

Now we are in a position to estimate the extent of the Pāli Canon and Commentary, which are our original source for investigation into the Buddha's system of meditation and insight. Meditation in Buddhism entails its potentialities, such as supernormal powers of various categories. It is to be borne in mind that this system definitely encourages its followers to acquire them; so does the Yoga-sūtra with its commentary and subcommentaries; as a general rule, the oriental system of yoga, Haṭha, Laya, Mantra, Kuṇḍalini (serpent power), and even Rāja-yoga display no aversion to these powers. If the Thera and Theri Gāthās and Apadānas, the 8th, 9th, 13th books of the fifth or Khuddaka Nikāya, reflect anyhow the Buddhistic trend of thought, we may be sure that supernormal power was an indelible factor of this trend.

The inner expression of aspiration and achievement of these nine hundred and thirty-eight monks and nuns is so eloquent in their ninety-six hundred and forty-four gāthās, about forty Bhāṇavāras, as to make us believe at least in the veracity of their bold declaration before an assembly of monks and nuns, not in their private cell or resort. They are not shy of their

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achievement in supernormal powers and full-fledged arhatship, even to declare them before the Master seated in the assembly. If we imagine for a moment that these arhats, monks and nuns, often dwelt in the fruit of their arhatship, then we shall have to accede to their claim also. For no one can remain in the specific state of mental abstraction, meditative void, and intellectual liberation from any botheration for a pretty long time, but fail to acquire the supernormal power in its trail. Only one category of liberated persons is said to possess no such power, the so-called Dry-discriminator (Sukkha-vipassaka). But those monks mentioned above were the regular ones; there were a large number of monks who were arhats possessed of supernormal powers, as can be gathered from the text as also from the commentary.

It would be an unsubstantial imagination to think that the Master was a simple meditationist and an intellectual moralist. If it were so, he would never have declared to the wanderer, Upaka, on his way to Isipatana (Sārnāth), soon after his Enlightenment, the following:

"One who has overpowered all, one who knows all, that am I;
To all dhammas (still) am I unattached;
One who has renounced all, in destruction of craving freed am I;
Having realized (all) by myself, whom shall I name (as a preceptor?)."

This is a textual gāthā, given in the Vinaya (Mahāvagga, 1.6) and also in the Dhammapada (Gāthā No. 353). The overpowering of all refers to the highest stage of supernormal power and so is the knowing. Moreover his quest of 'What is good?' was a polite way of referring to the supernormal power, knowledge and liberation. In no sense was it a mere quest of becoming a 'dry philosopher'. Were it so, so many intellectual elite of the time would not have thought it worth-while to accept and dwell lifelong in his Order.

How the Master looked at these powers can be gleaned from various suttas of the Sutta and the Vinaya. The Master's express demand to his foster-mother, Mahāpajāpati Gotami, Uppalavaṇṇā, and his own former wife Yaśodharā (Rāhulamātā), was to display, before the whole congregation of monks

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and nuns, at their last time of passing away, the manifestation of supernormal power, to remove the doubt of disqualification about the women's ordination in the order. The reason is quite understandable. For the first woman to get permission to enter the order was his own foster-mother. And the justification for the decision would be the evidence of supernormal power in her, which must have been the evidence of the arhatship as well. It is surely beyond the power of other monks to check whether those who passed away before them appeared or germinated somewhere or not (Parinibbuta).

The above account is found in the Theri Apadāna as follows: Mahāpajāpati Gotami in her Apadāna (2.7 Gāthā No. 174) says: "I intimated the Master: 'This is the time for my passing away.' Then he assented: 'Gotami! Know your time (Do what you think fit).' " This is the usual expression of the Master on such an occasion as this.

Further on (Gāthā No. 178), the Master says to her: "At the time of the conversion of women, some persons (Bālā) who had thought otherwise (unfavourably) should have their bias removed. For this purpose, Gotami! show the iddhi (supernormal power)." Similarly the Master said the same thing to the famous nun, Uppalavaṇṇā, who had in some past life of hers had given birth to five hundred babes who in time became all the five hundred Pacceka-buddhas. These are mentioned and praised by the Master himself in the Isigili sutta (*Majjhima*, III.16), the reference to their origin is in the commentary on this sutta. The short reference is also voiced in this Apadāna by herself (Gāthā Nos. 441 to 446) in her Apadāna (2.9).

When Uppalavaṇṇā asked his permission to pass away, the Master said to her (Gāthā No. 388): "Exhibit the iddhi also, follower of my discipline! Remove the doubt of the fourfold Assembly today." The doubt must have been the same as given above. And the nun was well-renowned also as an Iddhimā, a possessor of iddhi. Then we have the indication of three different traditions of Yaśodharā, as found in her Apadāna (2.8 and 2.9 and 2.10). A similar demand from the Master is found in the first (Gāthā No. 328) and third (Gāthā No. 430) Apadānas. This is sure evidence for our view that the Master's system definitely encourages its followers to acquire

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supernormal powers. The prohibition of the display of these powers before the people is said not to apply in the field of 'Iddhi by Resolve,' as mentioned in the commentary of the Vinaya (Culla-vagga, 5.10). The rule did not of course apply to the Master; for example, the twin miracle was performed in Sāvatthi by the Master after the prohibition.

To resume the topic of the extent of the Pāli Canon and Commentary, the reader will scarcely appreciate the importance of knowing this extent. But, when we realize the immense labour spent in counting these Pāli books by periodic phrases (padas or pādas), the record may look at least interesting, if not currently required. The counting is of course done by Bhāṇavāras, which we have already discussed above. It will be of interest to imagine how the elders or probably their Sāmaṇeras counted them phrase by phrase, and in the case of the *Majjhima Nikāya* even letter by letter, when the scripture was preserved in memory by recitation and not committed to writing. The scripture is said to have been written in Sinhalese script only about 440 years after the Master's passing away. Upto that time the scripture came down in a sort of memory book. The commentatorial literature, a huge collection, must also have been handed down till then or even later still in like manner. This might show the superiority of memory in the orient from very early times, augmented by still earlier records of the Vedic and allied subjects in a similar way.

The Pāli text in Bhāṇavāras, as given in the commentary of the *Dgīha Nikāya*, the first book of the *Sutta Piṭaka* (The first Council, Saṅgāyana-kamma), is as follows:

Name of Book of the Text	*Number of Bhāṇavāras*
Pārājika Pācittiya, two books of Vinaya...	64
Khandhaka Mahā Culla, two books of Vinaya...	80
Parivāra, the last or 5th book...	25
Dīgha Nikāya, the first book of the Sutta...	64
Majjhima Nikāya, the second book ,, ,, ...	80 (80.5)
Samyutta Nikāya, the third book ,, ,, ...	100
Aṅguttara Nikāya, the fourth book ,, ,, ...	120

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1	2	
(**Note**—the first book, *Khuddaka Nikāya*, will be dealt with later).		
The following data are given in the Nidāna Kathā of the Aṭṭhasālini:		
Dhammasaṅgaha (Dhammasaṅgaṇi), the first book...	13	
Vibhaṅga, the second book of the Abhidhamma..	35	
Dhātu Kathā, the third book ,, ,, ...	6	
Puggala Pannatti, the fourth book ,, ,, ...	5	
Kathāvatthu, the fifth book ,, ,, ...	35	(64)
(**Note**—the original was 64, but the present 35 only).		
Yamaka, the sixth book (Vīsa-bhāṇavāra-satam Sinhalese)...	120	
Paṭṭhana, the seventh book (Bhāṇavāra not found)...		
Totalling the above, we get—		
Vinaya Piṭaka, all the five books...	Bhāṇavāras	169
Suttānta Sutta Piṭaka, only first four Nikāyas	,,	364
Abhidhamma Piṭaka, only first six books	,,	214
Tipiṭaka, only fifteen books, and excluding the Khuddaka Nikāya and the Paṭṭhāna	,,	747

Paṭṭhāna, the last or seventh book of the Abhidhamma; the Aṭṭhasālini, the commentary of the Dhammasaṅgaṇi, gives, in its introductory Nidāna, only the first six data as given above. It does not mention any Bhāṇavāra for the last, while giving a full detail of its importance. We shall discuss this subject later.

Khuddaka Nikāya, consists of fifteen books, out of which the text itself records the Bhāṇavāras of the Sutta-nipāta as 8, the Vimāna-vatthu as 4, the Peta-vatthu as 4, and the Apadāna as 32 (Thera 26 and Theri 6 Bhāṇavāras). This comes to 48 Bhāṇavāras. The rest may be estimated, by us.

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The Paṭṭhāna is the culmination of the classification of the Dhammas said to have numbered 84 thousand separately. The principal basis of this classification consists of 24 conditions (paccayas) and their computation positively and negatively. The printed books compared to the Yamaka show that the Paṭṭhāna should be double the size of the Yamaka. Where the successive Councils of Recensions are studiedly reticent these twenty-five centuries about its quantity, I do not venture to advance my estimate rashly. By the permutation and combination of 84000 Dhammas under 24 Paccayas, the estimate of Bhāṇavāras might exceed our imagination.

The remaining books of the Khuddaka Nikāya can however be estimated of the Bhāṇavāras. The Jātaka text, for example, contains 6662 gāthās, out of which 1880 gāthās are longer than the regular gāthās, so that the total number of regular gāthās would amount to about 7600; the Kuṇāla Jātaka contains in addition a prose portion of about 1200 words. This gives us about 31 Bhāṇavāras.

This (above) Jātaka (Kuṇāla), No. 536, is the story, through which the Master enlightened the five hundred Shākyan and Koliayn youths near the bank of the mythical Himalayan Lake, as described in the Mahāsamaya sutta (Dīgha, II.7). The Kuṇāla Sakuna (Bird-king) may have something to do with the National Bird of Nepal termed Monāl, locally known as Dāphe. This Jātaka begins the prose portion unexpectedly as follows: "Thus it is related (said); thus it is heard." Then a long passage describes the beautiful scene of the Himalayan valley. "In such a forest-grove, Oh well, the Bird, named Kuṇāla, used to dwell." . . . At the end, the Master says: "Kuṇāla was I then . . . "

In this sort of calculation, we may estimate the rest of the books of the Khuddaka Nikāya. It is about 141 Bhāṇavāras, making a total of 189 Bhāṇavāras for the whole Khuddaka Nikāya. Thus leaving out the Paṭṭhāna, the rest of the Tipiṭaka in Pāli covers 936 Bhāṇavāras. This will give us roughly 2.4 words and 8.6 letters in millions. This huge scripture was handed down through memory from generation to generation at least for four and a half centuries until it was committed to writing in the reign of Vaṭ agāmani, the King of Sri Lankā.

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Our information of the Pāli source will not be complete until and unless we know something of the commentary. The so-called old and various commentaries said to have been preserved in the Sinhalese script are already lost to us. We have only the Pāli commentaries translated or converted from the old books into the Pāli language. We shall take into consideration the most essential of them, which the researcher will often need. The commentaries are mostly in prose with occasional quotations from old verses attributed to 'Porāṇās', the old-timers. The commentatorial tradition is however not identical in all the first four Nikāyas, even though the translator of these books is said to be Buddhaghosa. Although the individual characteristics of these books are a little different, they are wonderfully consistent in their main outlook in traditional orthodoxy. If one be conversant with one of the four commentaries, one may be sure of finding the same or similar explanation and stories in the rest of the commentaries.

The counting of the padas and thereby Bhāṇavāras of these commentaries might have been comparatively easy rather than those of the text. For the books of commentatorial literature were first written and then counted for their Bhāṇavāras, as the introduction with the conclusion to each of them implies. The large volume of the commentatorial literature attributed to Buddhaghoṣa makes us feel rather uncertain about the assertion made by himself that these were all his work. It might be assumed that he must have been the chief director, at best, of the whole enterprise. The general notion that he wrote all the books by himself seems to be rather far-fetched. He must have set the pattern and made the workers do the job under his direct supervision, All the books had to be attributed to him solely for the prestige his name carried with it at the time. The Visuddhi-magga must be certainly his own composition and is given the highest authority and greatest weight above all others. All the books have not however complied with this injunction probably of his own. The commentaries somehow or other have something to be explained at full length and tried to do away therein even with the said work.

Nevertheless, the introduction and the concluding portion of each of these commentaries definitely say that the commentary

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concerned is conceived, translated, and completed by him. He does not give us any indication of his employing anyone or any group of assistants or helping hands in this huge work. So we have to accept his statement in good faith. Thus the authorship of the commentaries of the first four principal Nikāyas, the whole of the Vinaya, and the Abhidhamma goes to Buddhaghoṣa alone. Not only this but the authorship of the commentaries on the Khuddaka-pāṭha, Dhammapada, Suttanipāta, and Jātaka of the Khuddaka Nikāya also goes to him. The commentaries on the Dhammapada and Jātaka are very extensive. The extent of these works would be fully understood only if we know each of them separately in Bhāṇavāras, padas, or words. They are as follows:

The commentary of the five books of the Vinaya is called the Samantapāsādikā and contains 1027 (Samadhika-sattabīsati-*sahassa*-mattena ganthena) works (gāthās). It is not clear whether the author means as many Bhāṇavāras as the number given at the end of the said commentary and mentioned above (1027), or it is a different measure. The printed commentary, however, contains 1416 pages in Roman script, 1359 in Burmese, 1537 in Devanāgari. So the given figure of 1027 is too high for the calculable Bhāṇavāras; it appears to be 127 Bhāṇavāras by our estimation, instead of what is given in the said commentary; but even then we cannot make the figure less than what it is. The Bhāṇavāras of the seven books of the Abhidhamma are in order as below:

39 in the first book, 40 in the second, 2 in the third, 7 in the fourth, 13 in the fifth, 5 in the sixth, 14 in the seventh, and altogether 120 in all the seven books.

The commentary of the first four Nikāyas of the Sutta Piṭaka in Bhāṇavāras is as follows:

	Bhāṇavāras
1. Sumaṅgala-vilāsini of the Dīgha	81
2. Papañcasūdani of the Majjhima	107
3. Sārattha-pakasini of the Samyutta	78
4. Manoratha-pūraṇi of the Aṅguttara	94
Total of these four Nikāyas	360

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These four books therefore contain 360 padas, 900 words, and 3308 letters in thousands. It is to be remembered that the Pāli text of these four Nikāyas is just 364, only four in excess of 360 Bhāṇavāras for the corresponding commentaries. These numbers of the Bhāṇavāras are apparently of the complete ones; for we have seen that the *Majjhima Nikāya* has actually 80.5 Bhāṇavāras, whereas the commentary of the Dīgha gave us only 80 Bhāṇavāras.

It is also to be remembered that Buddhaghoṣa stipulates in his introductory and concluding verses that his work, Visuddhi-magga, is integral to each of his commentaries. Hence he adds the Bhāṇavāras of this work to each of them. The Bhāṇavāra of this work is given as 58 (Aṭṭhapannāsa) at its concluding verses, whereas in all the four commentaries we find 59 (Ekūna-saṭṭhi-matta) Bhāṇavāras. He says that he wrote this work as a synthesis of the meanings and their conclusion stated after the manner of the commentary in all the five Nikāyas. If so, he had read the whole of the commentatorial literature before writing this work. Actually in the introductory verses of the first four Nikāyas, he says: "Because all this has been clarified in the Visuddhi-magga by me, therefore I shall not consider over that here (in these) again." This means that he had already written the work before engaging himself in the work of translating the Sinhalese commentaries. Even then he should have correctly stated the Bhāṇavāras of his own work. We may surmise that the original matter of the work was 58 Bhāṇavāras, but he had to add a Bhāṇavāra of matter later when he began to translate the Sinhalese commentaries.

In the introductory verses of the Samanta-pāsādikā, he does not mention the Visuddhi-magga, but in the body of the commentary, he refers to it about ten times. So it is also in the commentary of the Abhidhamma. This indirectly casts doubts on the tradition that Buddhaghoṣa had to write the work thrice without consulting any of the previous two copies of the work; and, when the three copies were compared by the authorities, not a single letter or words was found to differ in the three copies. But the fact is apparent that he enlarged it later. Besides these commentaries, Buddhaghoṣa is said to have

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translated other commentaries on the four or five books of the Khuddaka Nikāya. Two books out of these four or five ones are very extensive and important also. One of the two is the commentary (72 Bhāṇavāras) on the Dhammapada, an anthology of 423 verses which make up and come to about two Bhāṇavāras. The second (170+31 Bhāṇavāras) of the two is the Jātaka itself. The third is the commentary (44 Bhāṇavāras) on the Suttanipāta.

It will be interesting to get an idea of a well-read (Bahussuta) Bhikkhu or Buddhist. The Samanta-pāsādikā (Pācittiya-kaṇḍa, 3.21) says: "There are three kinds of well-read Bhikkhu. The first is one who has completed the fifth year of his ordination...he must be able to preach four Bhāṇavāras from the Suttanta... The second is one who has completed the tenth year of his ordination...he must be able to preach as below: If he be a reciter of the Majjhima (Majjhima-bhāṇaka), the first Fifty (Mūla-paṇṇāsaka) suttas; if a reciter of the Dīgha, the second part (Mahāvagga); if a reciter of the Samyutta, the first three vaggas or the last vagga (Mahāvagga, the fifth volume); if a reciter of Aṅguttara, the first half or the second half (of the whole Nikāya)...."

The commentary continues: "According to the Mahāpaccari (the old Sinhalese commentary on the Vinaya),...if (he be) a reciter of Jātaka, he should learn the (whole of) Jātaka with the commentary. And the Dhammapada also should be learnt with the (complete commentatorial) stories (Vatthus); so is said in the Mahāpaccari." This will show that these two books, Dhammapada and Jātaka, need be learnt or read with the commentaries to bear any fruit therefrom. It is natural under these stipulated rules that the recitation of Dhāraṇis and Mantras might have looked more attractive and desirable in later times than the compliance with these rules. The third category of the well-read Bhikkhu is said to be nothing less than the learning of the three Piṭakas (the whole of the Canonical Text) with the commentary. This is too much. For even in the 2nd category, the three hundred less one stories of the Dhammapada commentary cover 72 Bhāṇavāras; and the 547 main Jātaka stories with many sub-stories related within them might

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cover, excluding the 31 Bhāṇavāras of the Jātaka textual verses, something like 170 Bhāṇavāras.

Some allowance is of course made for the third category. The commentary says: "If one (well-read Bhikkhu) be unable to do so, the commentary of one of the four Nikāyas should be well developed (through its study); for, through one Nikāya he will be able to answer a question in the rest of the Nikāyas... "This is why the Gantha-dhura (the yoke of weight of study) was belittled in comparison to the Vipassanā-dhura (the yoke of intellectual discrimination) even by the Master. By the way, Samatha (quietude through meditation) is joined with Vipassanā in Buddhism. Thus meditation is a principal factor in the Master's system. At any rate, the study of the text also needs the relative commentary shown above.

The text and the commentary are available in a number of scripts or characters. The reference had been adequately given in this research as far as practicable; the page number could not however be specified in this reference; for the chief difficulty lay, in my case, in the non-availability of these books in Roman script in the local libraries. The page number of the books in other characters would not have been convenient for readers of all categories. The system of reference I have followed in this research will, I believe, enable the reader to trace the topic in the relative books in any script. The names of important books were not abbreviated, but given in full or in significant words, so that the reader might be habituated to know the names of most common books. It looks probably nice to be able to refer to these by current names in Pāli or their equivalent English words or phrases.

What we have discussed and described in the preceding sections will convince the reader that the Master's system is grounded on something solid and significant. With all the overgrowths and mythical allusions and seemingly unbelievable stories, the central core of the Master's experience, discovery, practice, and realization is intact in Pāli literature. This conviction dawns on our mind sooner or later.

Main Thesis of Research

The Shākya Prince, Siddhārtha, had organized a trance and

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dwelt therein for hours continuously and so deeply that he had unknowingly checked the shadow of the rose-apple tree from moving away as the sun moved towards the west. He was seated under the shade of the tree when he anyhow happened to organize the trance. This was before his renunciation and exit from his homeland to the outer world. The place is definitely stated to be the farmland of his father, even remembered years later by himself, as "Pitu-sakkassa kammante", or 'in Father Shākya's farmland'. The age of his is variously given in different old sources. But this very diversity in stating the age shows that the event had definitely occurred in Kapilavastu, his homeland, during his household life.

The trance was the most important and not the checking of the shadow. We may believe it or not. It does not matter in the least. The stationary shade or shadow was also certainly prevalent then as a hearsay, legend, myth, or incomprehensible event, and widely related in the Buddhist world. No plausible principle had been put forth so far in Buddhist literature for that extraordinary occurrence. The Mahāvastu and the *Lalita-vistara* have even recorded that, besides the shadow, the aerial movement of the Siddhas, five in number, was also inadvertently stopped. These five Rishis were speeding from the south toward the north, or vice versa, but were in their route above that very tree at the moment. They had no idea of the Prince or his trance. They were however surprised when their usual movement was suddenly checked. We need not believe the double event; what is of prime importance is the real beginning of the Buddha's system of meditation and its still more unbelievable potentialities later developed by the Buddha himself, when the Prince had attained Buddhahood.

The Pāli and Sanskrit sources widely differ in the significance of this trance. It was the first trance, according to the Pāli commentary, but the other version is that it was the gradual four stages of the form (Rūpāvacara) trance, the very foundation of the Master's or Buddhist trance, samādhi, absorption (Samāpatti), supernormal powers and branches of knowledge. The Master has never been asked what his device was in organizing it. The Pāli commentary however doggedly opines

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that the preliminary device of his was the observance of respiration (ānāpāna). The Pāli orthodox tradition is tenaciously dogmatic that whatever the Buddha organized obtained and was stabilized solely and entirely under the Bodhi tree.

The evidence found even in a number of Pāli suttas eloquently speaks against this dogmatic tenet. We might say this much that the culmination of his earlier endeavour was suddenly reached on that eventful night under the Bodhi tree. The Pāli source itself traces the developing stages of the Buddha through the gradual trances and similar supramundane stages of Liberation, Arhatship, or Nibbāna. In spite of the merit complex, the Pāli tradition is methodical in this respect; for it does not try to cross the limit of possibility even in the case of the Buddha. It is so because the Buddha is conceived after all as a human being. This conception of the Pāli scripture and the commentary immensely help us in tracing the gradual development of the Prince, through a variety of intervening impediments and experiences to the perfect poise of mental state in Liberation and Nibbāna.

The basic trance, technically called Jhāna, was a unique discovery of the Prince, as described above. It was surely unpremeditated and hence the deep absorption into it with the resulting externalization of its meditative depth. We are not quite sure of his age himself and no one had ever ventured to ask him this question. Later on, when the need for stating the age arose, there was no one who could give it. So there was a wide range of guesses from one month (Eka-māsiko samāno... Nāgasena), through the time when a baby could sit up by its own effort (vegena uṭṭhāya pallaṅkam ābhujitvā...commentary), the time when a boy could walk about (anucaṅkramante... Mahāvastu-avadānam), the time when a youth could go out on an excursion with many companions (anyaih... sārdham... gacchati sma...Lalita-vistara), and the time when the Prince rode with companions and saw the last sign, that is, the time approaching his Renunciation (abhiruhya sa Kanthakam sadasvam...Puruṣaśca-upasasarpa Bhikṣu-veṣah...Buddhacarita), to the time after this implied in the pilgrimage of King Aśoka with Upagupta (Aśokāvadāna).

Consistently enough, the site of his meditation is however,

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the same place, the rose-apple tree in the farmland of Kapilavastu. The *Lalita-vistara* and Nāgasena in the *Milinda-pānha* give us the regular four basic trances on this occasion, whereas the Pāli commentary insists on the preliminary ānāpāna and then the first trance. But the commentary appears to voice a dogmatic facet of tradition; for Nāgasena does not mention the ānāpāna as a preliminary to this trance, which he gives as the four trances. Now on this foundation we can smoothly develop, following his own autobiographical accounts scattered throughout the Pāli scripture and his teaching through thousands of discourses, the unique system of meditation discovered and taught by him to his hundreds and thousands of disciples in the land.

Substantially based on this system, he discovered the ways of obtaining supernormal powers and branches of knowledge. Then through these direct means he expounded his Kamma doctrine. Even the code of discipline was gradually promulgated primarily to facilitate the meditative life of his disciples. So equipped with the direct knowledge, he was in a position to discountenance all the philosophical beliefs derived either meditatively or inferentially. His non-committal views on God, Soul, the fundamental theories of matter, mind, and cosmos were the outcome of his meditatively liberated poise in Nibbāna. The stages of the realization of this state of mind, known as liberation, are said to be four in number. Each of these was subdivided into two categories, the fruit or established state and the way or first grasp of the stage or virtually the intermediate process till the stage is stabilized. Thus the ways and the fruits make up the eight supramundane stages in Buddhism, so far as the Ariyās including Arahas or Arhats are concerned. The ideal of a Bodhisattva has given birth to ideal Buddhism, and so has the ideal of the Buddha himself.

The enquiry into the Nibbānic state of the liberated Arhat after his physical decease lands us in an unknown field but not entirely beyond our intellectual penetration. There is no means however to verify our inferential finding or conclusion regarding this field; for no direct evidence is available in the scriptures. The usual simile of the burning lamp being extinguished conveys adequately neither the philosophical meaning

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nor the meditative one. The later authorities however have taken it positively, nor the Master appears to have done so negatively. Persistent research may bear fruit in this field as well; for the text and the textual commentary are plentiful and the commentatorial literature also may greatly help us therein.

Pacceka-buddhas have been rather inadequately represented in Buddhism. It is not quite clear as to why they are brought into the picture at all, when their role in Buddhism has not been assigned a place of importance or significance. Moreover their natural, voluntary, or obligatory passing away, when a Buddha is about to appear in the world, has not been satisfactorily dealt with in any book on Buddhism.

Former Buddhas are very problematic in any sect of Buddhism. The theory that they should be declared, as future Buddhas during their many lives of Bodhisattvahood, by many past Buddhas, is logically fallacious and looks interminably extending backwards. The problem is there and its solution is hard to find. How the theory and devotion of the former Buddhas originated in Buddhism is worth close investigation, considering the immense distance in time when the Buddha appears one after another.

The question of the future Buddha or Buddhas will be practically immaterial for our present age; for the time factor is immensely long; and so are the future Pacceka-buddhas; one of them will be the future Pacceka-buddha named Aṭṭhissara coming from hell. Really speaking, the Revelation of former Buddhas or Pacceka-buddhas and also that of the future ones may not come within the concern of the present yogins or the meditationists. In the Master's talk with other persons, we find little reference to these apparently incomprehensible questions.

In conclusion, I venture to express my belief that the above ten sections will give the reader an adequate idea about the matter and problem of Buddhism in the Buddha's own system of meditation with its supernormal and supramundane potentialities. The introduction to each of its Phases will be found in the initial chapter of each Phase. The Bibliography given at the end of each Phase is the barest minimum. If the transla-

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tions of the original literature be desired, they may be consulted in any reference work. Books on Buddhism may also be similarly consulted in any reference work. But the practical guidance on the Buddha's system of meditation is basically a matter of trial and error. This will be amply borne out by the authoritative and original materials provided in each Phase of this work systematically as much as it lay in my humble competence. At any rate each Phase will, I believe, give the reader an impression that it is an original work on the subject of meditation, which is entirely based on original matters. So this General Introduction will equally apply to each Phase as well as the work as a whole. In the end, I beg to offer my best apology to the Venerable Elders and the Savants of Buddhism all the world over for anything inadvertent, erroneous or unbecoming I may have said anywhere in this series.

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The Buddha's System of Meditation

PHASE ONE

THE FOUR FUNDAMENTAL TRANCES

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I

Introduction

The Goal and the Aim

BUDDHISM IS one of the most famous religions of the world. It was gradually established in many countries, replacing their primitive or prevalent forms of religious beliefs and practices. The reason seems to have been its wide appeal to man's instinctive quest after the supreme goal humanly attainable in this very life. Such a goal has a tendency to change from its first conception and postulation, as is evident in the development of religion and philosophy from simple and primitive forms into increasingly complex and comprehensive forms. Correspondingly, the ways and means of attaining the goal also change. These changes introduce confusion into the original method of attainment, making the goal unreal and imaginary. Hence it becomes necessary to discover a fresh and effective method of realising the goal or truth.

Meditation has always provided such a method. We come across such passages in the sacred books of world literature that plainly point to some form of meditation. When a supernatural element or agency is involved in any religion, we have to resort to meditation for its right apprehension. Even in philosophy a deep introspection is needed to have an insight into its inner or deeper import. This insight is only possible through some sort of meditation. In our everyday life also,

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meditation helps us to consolidate our scattered concepts and ideas into some sort of system, especially in order to find a way out of our besetting problems. Thus meditation is an active principle in our mental process, normal or supernormal. Consequently, the flow of meditation goes on ramifying itself till a system emerges out of its ramification to such an extent that the unique experience gained through it equates a truth irrefutable by any known logical method.

Indeed the earlier and purer form of Buddhism is mainly based upon the foundation of this very system of meditation. Its first state however was discovered by the Shākya Prince Siddhārtha himself in a certain field of Kapilavastu in the western part of Nepal's Terai before his Great Renunciation. This system was characterised by simplicity, naturalness, rationality, and automatic graduation. Nevertheless, it deepened more and more until it entered into a state of far-reaching consequences termed Nibbāna. This state is regarded as inexpressible but of profound insight and realisation known as Perfect Enlightenment.

This research work aims at exploring this system from its first discovery through later developments to its culmination in Nibbāna.

The State of Nibbana

The principal purpose of the Prince's renunciation and quest after "What is the supreme good?" is generally understood to have been the eradication of human sorrows perceived through his observing the four signs, viz., old age, disease, death, and renunciation. But we overlook the fact of his unique discovery that might have left in his mind an indelible impression prompting him to leave his family and home in order to quest after the supreme good. In fact his search ultimately landed him in this very state of his earlier discovery. This trance, when developed to its last phase, was found to be the Good he had so long sought after. It was obviously the state of Nibbāna. Its negative aspect has been rather laboriously dealt with by many savants. But none seems to have tried to unfold its positive side as well. As a matter of fact, he appears to have discerned its positive facet to his entire satisfaction. His claim

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to Buddhahood and his utterances just after its realisation prove the thesis.

Following the lead of his first discovery, this research also aims, as far as is compatible with the scattered references to this facet, at presenting this positive aspect.

Contributing Factors

The discovery of the first trance, although given abruptly in several accounts, must have been the result of many factors not mentioned in any systematic form. One of them may have been the long tradition of the Shākyas, whose origin is traced back to their first settlement in the great forest of Nepal. This event is associated with the Mystery Sage Kapila of Kapilavastu. Another is the supernatural phenomenon witnessed by a mystic saint named Kāla or Asita Devala of Kapilavastu at the time of the birth of the baby, later named Siddhārtha or Sarvārtha-Siddha. This saint foresaw the future greatness of the Infant. The prophecy of the royal astrologers about the first-born might also have been a factor. In ancient times such a prediction had some effect on the people's minds. Moreover, the Shākyan social environment seems to have been of a highly cultured type even in those remote times. In addition to this there was the undeniably important factor of wandering ascetics. They were shown great respect by and received homage from the people. Their diverse views must have contributed to an atmosphere of free thinking. It can be easily conceived that this sort of freedom greatly helps to carry out fruitful research.

Myths and Miracles

There are numerous myths and miracles in Buddhism as in other religions of the world. These fascinating legends and stories consist of many varieties ranging from natural to supernatural, ordinary to extraordinary, and human to divine phenomena. They are not limited to the canonical and non-canonical books of one vehicle[1] only, but they are found to some extent in both the vehicles of Buddhism.

Hence it is often very difficult to sort out the bare facts from such huge overgrowths. It is, however, noteworthy that we generally find the human elements in the accounts of early

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Buddhism, especially in the Buddha's autobiographical reminiscences. The accounts of the latter category can be of immense value to understand and evaluate the nucleus of early Buddhism.

The task of this research is, therefore, of an exacting nature: to collect and consolidate these bare facts and human elements into a unified whole.

Nepal's Contribution

Great personages, human or divine, maintain world-wide views. Hence the countries of the world have an equal right to their achievements, realisations, teachings, manifestations and missions. Nevertheless there are some events connected with their life and activities, of which the country and community concerned may feel proud and which they may even ascribe to the contributions of the latter. Nepal cannot be an exception to this general phenomenon found all over the world. Accordingly, Nepal and her people may take pride in the Shākyan Prince Siddhārtha, his life, discovery, and activities, as well as in the events and legends said to have occurred in the Shākyan territories within Nepal. Besides, along with all the Buddhistic countries and communities, their people and followers, monks, savants, and scholars, the people of Nepal may feel proud of such contributions to the origin, discovery, and development of early Buddhism and to some extent of its enlarged versions. Nepal is also not without reason proud of preserving the ancient text and its simple version in her native language, not yet fully explored by researchers and scholars.

This research will also try to point out a few salient features in such a direction, if they throw some light on the thesis under research.

Shakyan Ancestors

According to the Buddha, King Okkāka, presumably of the Kosala kingdom, was regarded as the ancestor of the Shākyas. All the elder sons of the King had to be banished from the kingdom through the machinations of the King's favourite younger wife. They went away and settled on the bank of a lake situated in a great sāk or sāl forest on the flanks of the Snow Mountain or

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the Himalayas. In order to preserve their lineal purity or pride, they had to marry their own or step-sisters. When the King heard the news, he exclaimed: "Oh, verily, the Princes are Shākya, parama Shākya." Thenceforward the Shākyas were known as such, so says the Buddha in the Discourse named the Ambattha Sutta in the Dīgha Nikāya or the Collection of Longer Discourses. The word Shākya means capable, but it may mean here proud and very proud, respectively. Thus the Shākyas originated in the Nepal Terai and founded their first settlement there.

Mystery Sage Kapila

The commentary on the above-mentioned Discourse gives further information on the subject. It is said that the banished Princes had wandered far and wide before they entered the great forest of Nepal. Already residing there was a sage named Kapila in a hermitage of his own. He took pity on these wandering Princes and allowed them to build a town thereabouts. The sage even suggested that they should construct a citadel of the town on the spot where his own hermitage stood. He told them that any fortress built therein would be impregnable against any attack. Accordingly the town and the citadel were made and they named it Kapila-vastu after the name of the donor.

There is another version about the sage Kapila, who was the founder of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. He is said to have destroyed thousands of princes of the Kosala kingdom, who had insulted him in his hermitage. This myth or incident may indirectly hint at the probable enmity existing between the neighbouring two countries, Shākyan and Kosalan. The massacre of the Shākyas perpetrated by Viḍuḍabha, the young King of Kosala, is another instance pointing to this enmity.

The commentary does not mention the second version. But it states, among other things, that the sage was well-versed in occult science as well. This Pāli tradition is also found in poetical form written by the poet Aśvaghoṣa, in the first canto of *Saundarānanda*. The second unfortunate incident is fully related in the Purāṇas. The Sage as the founder of the famous philosophy is known in the Purāṇas and several schools of

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Hindu philosophy. The existence of the name and site of Kapilavastu in Nepal is, however, itself a proof of the fact that a sage of that name existed in Nepal.

Mystic Saint Asita

There was another mystic saint named Kāla or Asita (black) Devala. He was a royal astrologer and astronomer. He is also credited with reforming the old almanac and introducing a new Añjana era, but its particulars are not available. This mystic seems to have been the first man to foresee and foretell the future greatness of the Baby. The Pāli Nidāna-kathā makes him a royal (kulupaga) preceptor, but the mixed Sanskrit texts in the *Lalita-vistara* and the *Mahā-vastu* describe him as a Himalayan ascetic. In the former, the King Suddhodana says to him: "I do not remember, O Rişi, to have seen you." This sage appears also in the *Assalāyana Sutta*, the 43rd of the second part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The Master related this old story to a Brahman scholar of the Assalāyana family in Sāvatthi. In the story seven Brāhman Rishis were debating among themselves on the topic of the Brahman caste being the best. This position of the Brāhmaṇas was not tolerated by Asita Devala. He appeared among them and challenged their position. They were defeated in argument with and by him.

We meet this Asita Devala in the *Mahābhārata* also. He was in the Āditya Tīrtha; there another Rishi named Jaigişavya who came and achieved supernormal powers; we shall again meet the latter in connection with the remembering of past lives.

This mystic saint was so sure of his foresight about the future greatness of the Baby that he prompted his sister's son Nāḍaka to become a recluse then and there. He advised his nephew to avail himself of the Baby's Enlightenment in future. Such a spiritual tradition in the Shākyan family and land must have influenced the Prince from his early childhood.

Astrologers

There were many astrologers then in Kapilavastu. They were also called in and prophesied the future greatness of the royal infant. It was the youngest of them who became a recluse forthwith and waited for the enlightenment of the Baby. He

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was the first disciple of the Buddha. He had also persuaded the four sons of the old astrologers who were dead by that time to seek the Prince who had renounced the world. This shows the temper of the Shākyan times. This was also the nucleus of the earliest Buddhistic Order, the foundation members of which were all from Kapilavastu.

Free Thinking

The age in which the Prince found himself was conducive to free thinking. It was very probable that the wandering ascetics holding diverse views and their discussions raised doubts on traditional tenets and superstitions. These doubts must have given birth to free thinking. It is surprising to find the people listening with interest to different doctrines of a metaphysical import. None of the proponents of those strange but fascinating theories is found to be quoting any passage from the sacred books or the old authorities in support of his doctrine. Such an atmosphere of free thinking could not have left the Prince unaffected. At the same time he may have been perplexed about the real issue of the supreme goal. In these circumstances, it was natural that he should have turned inwards to find a solution, amidst those conflicting opinions, satisfactory to himself. So he gradually acquired a contemplative turn of mind, instead of what his Shākyan relatives wanted him to be. Such an adverse criticism about him was actually voiced by his kinsmen. Consequently he had to take part in some kind of physical feat and tournament. The manner of his free thinking can be seen in the *Deva-daha Sutta*, the 1st sutta of the third part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, preached to the monks by the Master, when he was staying in the Shākyan country, in Deva-daha, the town of the Shākyas. The commentary says: "Deva means Princes. There was an auspicious tank (maṅgala-pokkāraṇi) of Shākya Princes, nice-looking and well protected... thereby the town was also known as Deva-daha. The Master making the town for begging alms, was staying in the Lumbini grove (Lumbini-vana)."[2]

The Four Signs

The myth of the four signs, such as old age, disease, death,

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and renunciation, is so popular in Buddhist literature that we have little means to verify them by facts. But we do not come across any reference to such an event in the Master's autobiographical reminiscences found in the canonical suttas or discourses. Dr. E.J. Thomas has also expressed a similar opinion on the subject. He writes in his work *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, Chapter V, page 51: "At the age of twenty-nine Gotama...was startled...at the first sight of old age, sickness, and death, and...became an ascetic. This is essentially what the latter tradition tells us, but the Scriptures preserve earlier accounts of his conversion which not only imply that this tradition did not then exist, but are in conflict with it."

Such is the trend of the critical study of the widely accepted accounts of the Scriptures among Western scholars. As a matter of fact, the sacred scriptures are sometimes so conflicting within themselves that their earlier and later phases are markedly apparent. So it is in the Buddhist *Tripiṭaka* or *Tipiṭaka* and its commentaries. We have, however, to consider both sides of the question and find out our own conclusion. The Shākya Prince might have frequently seen the miseries as well as the happiness of the people. But it was the misery that touched his heart deeply. Hence the accepted formula of the four signs could not be invalid, if the Prince felt the human sorrows as fundamental in the world. For, the Master has expounded human sorrows in full detail in several suttas and the former can be summarised as birth, decay, and death, while the usually known path, in his time, was renunciation.

The Great Renunciation

There were many seekers after truth in those remote ages. They had left their homes and families in search of this. It was simply renunciation. But the Prince's action is called "Great". This is because of our reverence towards him and also specially the great outcome afterwards. So were his great conception and birth. Similarly, his leaving his home and hearth is regarded as the Great Renunciation. It is a matter of great pride for the people of his native land that all these events took place in the land of Nepal. The most important of all the phenomena occurring in this land was his discovery of the First Trance

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under the rose-apple tree in the farming land of Kapilavastu.

The need for and cause of this renunciation are fully told in the 13th chapter "Sañcodana" of the *Lalita-vistara* and that better and more logical than what is given in the *Nidāna-kathā* of the Pāli *Jātakaṭṭha-kathā*. This chapter is a long account given in prose and verse covering twenty-four pages. Some Beings thought: "Long time, Oh, this good man tarries in the inner palace." But the Bodhisattva knows his own time well enough. Then the higher unseen beings converted the palace-music into a grand remonstrance, that is given in 160 verses of wonderful expressiveness and force.

THE FIRST TRANCE

The Buddha's Autobiography

IN THE Pāli *Tipiṭaka*, we do not find anyone asking the Master to relate his early life. In the *Lalita-vistara*, however, the first chapter "Nidāna-Parivarta" gives us an account of such a question put to the Master. The answer was provided in the *Lalita-vistara*. Here the Buddha is mentioned as Shākya-simha and Svayambhū also. These two names are popular in Nepal. But in several places of the Pāli canonical suttas, we find some short and some long accounts of an autobiographical nature concerning the Master. These accounts are in the form of his own early reminiscences recounted by himself on appropriate occasions.

In such accounts there is nothing mythical or miraculous. Here we find him as a human being with all human characteristics. He was fond of his parents; he left them weeping with tears in their eyes; he was youthful; he left home. It was because he thought that household life was painful, dirty, and unsuitable. The life of renunciation was, said he, free like the open sky. These are told in the Pāli version in simple but exquisite diction. The *Mahāvastu-avadāna* and the *Lalita-vistara* have other embellished versions.

The story of his renunciation is found in many suttas. He himself has also told it on several occasions. Ultimately he left his home and family at the age of twenty-nine years. After passing through three territories of the Deva-daha Shākyas,

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Koliyas, and Mallas, he arrived at the bank of a broad river called Anomā. But according to the 15th chapter of the *Lalita-vistara*, it was a town named Anuvaineya of the Maineyas. The Pāli *Nidāna-kathā* says that the Bodhisatto stayed in a mango-grove named Anupiya for a week, in the same place, that is near to the Anomā river. The distance from Kapilavastu to the place where he stopped is 40 yojanas in the Pāli, 12 yojanas in the Tibetan source cited by W.W. Rockhill in his work *The Life of the Buddha*, and six yojanas in the *Lalita-vistara*. The Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Hsian and Yuan Chwang, make it almost equal to 9 yojanas.

The 16th chapter of the *Lalita-vistara* (the meeting of Bimbisāra) says that the Bodhisattva, after his self-ordination, went to the hermitage of Śāki Brāhmaṇi; she welcomed him; from there went to the hermitage of Padmā Brāhmaṇi; she also received him; then he went to the hermitage of Raivata Brahmarṣi; he also invited the Bodhisattva; similarly Rājaka, the adopted son of Daṇḍika, invited the Bodhisattva. Thus gradually the Bodhisattva arrived at the metropolis of Vaiśāli. In the Pāli *Nidāna-kathā* it was said that, from the mango-grove of Anupiya, the Bodhisatto, walking 30 yojanas in one day on foot, entered Rājagaha (the capital of Magadha). The Tibetan source of W.W. Rockhill,[3] (p. 26 of *Life of the Buddha*) has another tale to tell. It is said that "the Prince went to the hermitage of the Riṣi, the son of Brigu" (Bhrigu?). He learned from the Riṣi that the distance to Kapilavastu from there was 12 yojanas. "It is too near, Kapilavastu; I may be disturbed by the Shākyas. I will cross the Ganges and go to Rājagriha." So saying, he went to Rājagriha (Rājagaha).

Two Teachers

In the Bodhisattva's reminiscence, we find him mentioning the two teachers, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka, the son of Rāma. The former taught him to meditate on Nothingness, while the latter taught him the device to attain a state of neither consciousness nor unconsciousness. These mental states apparently have been confused in the commentary and the commentatorial literature with the Buddha's system of gradual meditation. It is plainly contradictory with the Bodhisattva's own reminiscence

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concerning the First Trance. For, if he learned all the gradual trances from these two teachers, there was no sense in his saying: "I remember...the First Trance...This is perhaps the way to Bodhi or Enlightenment..." Nāgasena says, in the 5th se ction of the fourth part of *Milinda-Pāñha* that those two teachers taught him the preparatory device to these two states.

The *Lalita-vistara*, in chapter 17, has an interesting reference to this. Rudrako Rāma-putro lived near the metropolitan city of Rājagriha with his disciples numbering 750. The Bodhisattva approached him and asked: "O friend, who is your preceptor? Or whose doctrine do you follow?" He replied: "Well friend, I have none as my preceptor. Nevertheless, it is verily I myself who have well achieved this." Ārāḍa Kālāpa (or Kālāma) was living near Vaiśāli with his disciples numbering 350. He was teaching his doctrine for meditation on Nothingness. The Bodhisattva approached him and learned the device from him. It is narrated in chapter 16 of the *Lalita-vistara*.

W.W. Rockhill writes, from Tibetan sources (pp. 27 and 28), thus: "After this interview (with Śrenika Bimbisāra) the Bodhisattva went to the Vulture's Peak (Gridhakūṭa parvata) near Rājagriha, and lived with the ascetics who dwelt there, surpassing them all in his mortifications, so that he became known as the great ascetic or Mahāśramaṇa..." After that, he went to Ārātā Kālāma, who taught him that "All depended on controlling the senses..." Then he went to Rudraka Rāma-putro. The same author writes (p. 28): "He went to ..Mount Gayā . and took up his abode at the foot of a tree near the bank of the lovely Nairañjanā river, and there he continued his mortifications, gradually making them more and more severe."

The above quotation from Tibetan sources shows that the austerities of the Bodhisattva were not performed only near the river Nairañjanā continuously for six years. In the Canonical Suttas, there are some indications of this, but it is generally held to be six years in round numbers. In a comparative study, we come across several points which differ from the accepted version. Hence we should not take the Pāli Canon only as authentic and invariably correct. There are several points in

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which versions other than those in Pāli appear to be, at least, clearer and more plausible.

Their Doctrines

The doctrines of these two teachers are nowhere fully explained. We know only of the trances they are said to have realised themselves, which were told to the Bodhisattva. Then he thought that the five factors needed for their trance were also in himself. With the help of these five factors he organized those trances but found them unsatisfactory. These five factors are also found in the 20th sūtra of the *Yoga-Sūtra*, part I, the *Samādhi-pāda*. The commentary of Vyāsa takes up the first factor Śraddhā, (Suddhā in Pāli,) and gradually develops it to Virya, thence to Smriti, Samādhi, and Prajñā; these are Viriya, Sati, Samādhi and Paññā, respectively, in Pāli. Apparently the mention of these five factors prompted the Poet Aśvaghoṣa to compose 88 imaginative verses in the 12th canto of his work *Buddha-carita*. But his presentation has strayed far from the Master's own reminiscence and made his labours on this head valueless for our research. Without any foundation in the Canon, he makes Arāḍa Kālāyasa explain the various trances to the Bodhisattva, who, without organisıng the trances, refutes the doctrine of Arāḍa and deserts him. Similarly the poet makes the Bodhisattva's interview with Rudraka short. Most probably Buddhaghoṣa was also influenced by this poetic fancy in confusing these two trances with those of the gradual ones in his above-mentioned commentary. Both the names of these savants are dazzling, but the research discloses their fancies to be baseless.

Austerities

After discarding the teachings and unsatisfactory trance of these two teachers, the Bodhisattva resorted to the time-honoured practice of austerity for six years, as generally recorded in the Canon. The first three similes struck his mind. Although these similes do not apparently seem to be exceptional, they struck his mind as such; it is said that they were unheard of before and so they are. There are some differences between the Pāli suttas and chapter 17 of the *Lalita-vistara* on this subject.

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The Pāli suttas do not mention that the Bodhisatto found the shortcoming in himself touching these similes, but the account of the *Lalita-vistara* says that he found it in himself. Thereupon he determined to undertake the austerities.

The first important step was the forcible restraining of respiration (appānaka) while meditating. This practice is very old and still current in the orient. It is not explained very well in Pāli; its equivalent should have been in Sanskrit 'aprāṇaka', but it is given as 'āsphānaka' in the *Lalita-vistara*. This is a new word, so it is fully explained therein. However, the method of prāṇāyāma, as detailed in books on yoga, was not exactly the same as he is reported to have done. Naturally he underwent a severe pain in the body and was as if dead. Such a forcible restraint of respiration with the closure of nine doors or holes, that is, eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, and two lower apertures, used to be practised in Nepal also. It was called 'Nava-dāvra Bandhana' and not to arouse the Kuṇḍalini, known as 'serpent power'. But it was never done as resolutely and for so long a time as is stated in the Canon.

The next step was a sort of fasting. This was also an old practice. Penance through long fasting is practised in most countries of the world; it does help, if done occasionally, to calm the mind; but he did it for a very long time. He did both the practices to an extreme degree. So we find him recommending the middle way between these two extremes in his teaching, except in his system of meditation, trance, insight, and Nibbāna.

Remembrance

To continue the Bodhisattva's reminiscence, he says: "I remember, when I was seated beneath the shady rose-apple tree in the farming field of my father Shākya ('pitu sakkassa kammante'), that I had, quite separate from sensual desires and separate from evil thoughts, organized and dwelt in the First Trance (Jhāna) with vitakka, with vicāra, over-flooding with joy (pīti) and pleasure (sukha) born of seclusion. This is perhaps the way to Bodhi (Enlightenment). At the same moment my inner voice said: 'this is the way to Bodhi'." He deliberated over the issue and the problem of reconciling concomitant pleasure with fundamental human suffering.

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At last he determined to follow up his own earlier and first discovery of meditation or trance. He abandoned his austerities and began to take nourishing food in order to regain his strength. There is an interesting account in the *Mahā-vastu-avadāna* and the *Lalita-vistara*, not found in Pāli, touching on the resumption of nutriment. Some spiritual beings, who were fond of austerity, came up and told him not to take solid food because it may harm his prestige; but he did not want anything false; his decision was final. He began to take food and quickly regained his health and strength.

Nagasena on Austerities

Nāgasena has given some explanation regarding the austerities undertaken by Bodhisatto. In the 8th vaggo of the 4th part of the *Milinda-Pāñha*, King Milinda puts a question to Nāgasena: "Reverend Nāgasena, do all the Bodhisattas undertake austerities, or did the Gotama Bodhisatto only undertake these?" Nāgasena said: "Not all, Mahārāja...only the Gotama did so." When the savant answered his supplementary question, saying that all the Buddhas are equally similar in Bodhi, the King asked him the reason for such austerities undertaken by Gomata. In reply, he explained that it was to mature the immature Bodhi that the Bodhisatto went away from home. Then the King remarked that the Bodhisatto should have gone away only after the maturation of Knowledge. Nāgasena explained that the Bodhisatto became remorseful on seeing the disagreeable scene of the palace-girls; this gave birth to his discontent; thinking the mood to be opportune for amusing the Bodhisatto, a certain spiritual being of Māra region tried to deceive him. The Being staying in the air said: "Friend, friend, do not get distressed. Seven days from this time, the supernatural wheel of universal sovereignty (Dibba cakka-ratana) will appear to you..." This word added more fuel to his already distressed mind. It is to be noted that Nāgasena thinks that this was a false promise uttered by that Being with a deceptive purpose. But the Pāli *Nidāna-kathā* does not discern this deep purpose of the Māra...

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Legend of Mara

The legend of Māra is invariably found in the Canon, commentary, and literature. He is said to be a powerful deity and tries and tests the Buddha and his disciples time and again. A separate research study will be needed if we are to discover the actual reason for his disagreement with the Buddha. The reason given in the Pāli Canon and commentary does not seem to be satisfactory. There must be some hidden purport in his constant endeavour to hinder the propagation of the Dhamma of the Buddha leading one to Nibbāna. He seems to be opposed to any system of ways leading to complete liberation. Besides his legendary war with the Bodhisattva, the *Samyutta Nikāya*, volume 1, has several chapters, such as the 4th and 5th, in which Māra appears to deceive and terrify the nuns and monks and even the Buddha. It is sometimes difficult to know what Māra is; in the Māra sutta of Chapter 23 of Volume 2 of the *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Monk Rādha asks the Master: "Māra, Māra, is said, O Lord, what and how much is Māra to be understood?" (To what extent and how is Māra to be understood?) The Master said: "Well, Rādha, if there be a material form, there must be Māra, the killer, or the one who is killed. Therefore, you Rādha, look at the material form as Māra, the killer, or the one who is killed . Those, who see it so, see it right...If there be feeling...perception...formation...consciousness, there must be Māra..." This sutta mystifies the conception of any personal Māra. But it is not always so. The Master has spoken in some sutta of the three daughters of Māra, as if he has actually seen them in person. Many disciples of the Master have seen his different forms. He is not merely a mental form in concept or imagination, but a powerful deity who can even possess a higher being and make him say what he likes.

Māra is decidedly more powerful than his counterpart in the Purāṇic Kama-deva, Madana, or Smara. He is not like Satan. He is condemned anywhere so vehemently as in the Buddhist Order. Mahā-Moggallāna himself had once before been a Marā named Dūsi, as recounted in the 50th sutta of the 1st part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The preceptor of Aśoka is even said to have converted Māra and prevailed over him to assume the form of the Buddha as he saw him. It is strange that Māra

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has never mentioned God before the Buddha or any of his disciples. He does not seem to have been afraid of any higher beings except the Buddha. Reprimanded so often, still he visited the Master as often as he thought fit. Decidedly he had a deep-seated secret purpose of cosmic significance, but he could not convince the Master of it, nor was he ever able to divert the view-point of the Buddha away from complete non-attachment with any phenomenal cosmic world and its wonders.

If we collect all the portions and suttas wherein Māra is mentioned, the collection would be a large one. Even then it will not resolve the problem. Perhaps Māra knows enough; hence he does not seem to be very curious even of formless trances.

Organization of Trance

The Buddha's autobiographical reminiscence goes on further. When he decided to take solid food and began to do so, he says that his five disciples, who had been attending on him during his austerities, left him, thinking that he had fallen from the path. These five ascetics were from Kapilavastu, as mentioned above. The Pāli *Nidāna-kathā* says that they, wandering far and wide for alms, came to Uruvelī and found the Bodhisatto there. But Chapter 17 of the *Lalita-vistara* has a better account: "They were living with Rudraka... They thought: 'For which purpose we are trying...for long, but we could not achieve its end or limit. But this ascetic Gautama did very easily realise it. Still he does not like it...' Thereupon they left Rudraka Rāmaputro and followed the Bodhisattva." Aśvaghoṣa says in verses 91 to 93 of Canto 12 of the *Buddha-carita* that these five ascetics were already engaged in penance on the bank of the Nairañjanā river before the arrival of the Bodhisattva there.

A different story is given by W.W. Rockhill[4] from his Tibetan sources (at p. 28 of his book). "Now King Shuddhodana had heard...that his son was stopping with Rudraka Rāmaputra, near Rājagriha...; so he sent three hundred men, and Suprabuddha sent two hundred, to wait on him; but the Bodhisattva would only retain five of them..." (p. 13), the author says that Suprabuddha was the son of Shuddhā, the eldest daughter of

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Sinhahanu, the father of Shuddhodana. In Chapter II and at p. 14, he observes: "During King Sinhahanu's reign the country of Kapilavastu enjoyed peace and prosperity, as did also the country of Devadaha, over which Suprabuddha was reigning." This is of course a different version from a Tibetan source.

Buddhaghoṣa has given an interesting reason for their desertion of the Bodhisatto. Commenting on the 36th sutta of the first part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, he writes: "It was the law of Dhamma that they went away distressed; the law of Dhamma was to give the occasion of affording physical seclusion at the time of the Bodhisatto's attaining Sambodhi." And further he says that, after their going away, the Bodhisatto obtained seclusion for half a month and then sat down upon the Bodhi Seat and penetrated the all-knowing knowledge.

It is, however, a pity that those five disciples left him alone. Had they been present at the time of his attaining the final Enlightenment, we would have got their version of the struggle with the legendary Māra in a better light. They would have certainly described some phenomenon, physical or otherwise. There was no human being to observe it; so some critics turn it into his internal struggle; some mystics think it a meditative phenomenon; some believe that it was a physical event. Hence it has become a mystery.

To resume the reminiscence, the Bodhisatto soon organized the First Trance, as he had already done years before in Kapilavastu. By the normal process of sublimating the First, he gained the Second Trance. By similar means he reached the Third and Fourth Trances. From what we gather from the reminiscences, the successive stages of the Trance were the natural outcome of the original First Trance. It is a state of steady, brilliantly clear and overwhelming flow of consciousness. The Fourth stage was exceptionally pure and free from attachment to any meditative phenomena. So it seems that this state of mind is "brilliant by nature," and the Buddha later says in a sutta of the 5th and 6th vaggas or sections of the Ekaka Nipāta of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.

The Lines of Progress

From this Fourth Trance, there are two lines of progress.

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The authorities differ as to which of the two lines was adopted by the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisatto's reminiscences found in all the relevant suttas are definitely directed towards the line of knowledge gained successively by the Bodhisatto.[5] It shows that he was keen about the knowledges which, except the last one, were not strictly necessary for his own liberation. It is too clear in the reprimand given by the Buddha to Monk Susima, as recounted in the Susima Paribbājaka Sutta, the 70th one of the second Nidāna vaggo of the *Samyutta Nikāya*.

There is another piece of the Bodhisatto's reminiscence about his early practice of trance as to how he was able to steady his meditative state of mind constantly. This is found in the 28th sutta of the 3rd part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. This famous and important sutta shows that the Bodhisatto was not forthwith bending his mind towards the two supernatural knowledges, but was intent on stabilizing his trance. Moreover, in the 31st sutta of the first part of the same *Nikāya*, the Buddha is very pleased with monks Anuruddha and his two friends Nandiya and Kimbila, all the three Shākya youths, with their highest attainments from the first trance gradually to the ninth or the cessation of perception and feeling.

Nāgasena is also of opinion, in the 3rd vagga of the 4th part of the *Milinda-Question* that the Buddha had organized the gradual nine trances excellently on two occasions, viz., the first one after he ate the meal of Sujātā and attained Enlightenment, and the second one when he ate the meal of Cunda and passed away into Nibbāna. We know definitely that the latter was a gradual process of nine trances from the first to the ninth and then from the ninth to the first and again from the first to the fourth trance. Immediately he got up from the fourth trance, at that same moment he passed away. For no one dies during a trance.

The *Daśa-bhūmika Mahāyāna Sūtra*, one of the nine sacred Buddhistic works of Nepal, tries, in Chapter 3, to reconcile these two lines quite admirably. But the authority of the extant reminiscence in the Pāli and Mixed Sanskrit Text cannot be denied. However, the gradual nine trances are so natural that the Bodhisattva could not have stopped in the middle and tried to divert his attention towards two knowledges of, so to say,

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secondary importance from his own dictum in the Susima Paribbājaka Sutta given above. Moreover, the Part of the Cessation of Sorrows lies in the realisation of Nibbāna in trance or in insight. But the Bodhisattva could not have been satisfied with insight only; he must have organized and dwelt in the last trance af Direct Nibbāna.

The Three Knowledges

When the Bodhisatto had developed the first trance gradually to the fourth stage or the Fourth Trance, his mind became clear, bright, purified, and supple. Then he says: "Then I directed my mind towards the knowledge of remembering my past lives..... Then I did the same, through super-normal eyes, for gaining the knowledge of the other persons' past lives...Thus I fully gained these two supernatural knowledges successively in the first and second watches of the night...Ignorance disappeared; knowledge dawned; darkness was gone; supernatural brilliance appeared." This insight into the past of himself and other persons led him to the second discovery of the fundamental link of the successive phases, which one's own cycle of births or rebirths had to undergo and experience.

In some religions, only the final rebirth or resurrection is accepted, but most of the oriental religions maintain such a doctrine of recurring rebirths until final liberation, when the cycle of rebirths is broken and stopped. Although this doctrine comes in to explain the law of action or its resultant, the acceptance of this doctrine is not strictly imperative for following the Buddha's system of meditation. The Master never insisted on its deliberation and taught that the present is the most important opportunity for gaining insight. This precept is called "Bhaddekaratta Sutta" found in four consecutive suttas, from the 31st to 34th ones of the third part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The last sutta is very interesting: A certain heavenly being named Candano Deva-putto asked a monk, Lomasa-kaṅgiyo, who was meditating one night in the Nigrodhaārāma of Kapilavatthu, if the latter knew all about the Bhaddekaratta. The commentary describes the interesting occasion, on which this Being had listened to this sutta delivered by the Buddha in the heaven, where the Buddha was passing the rainy

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season; it was when the Master was staying in Sāvatthi in the seventh year of his Bodhi.

The Buddhist theory of rebirth is not that of transmigration, nor that of metempsychosis. It is explainable only through the chain of causation known as "dependent origination". In our common parlance, we may say that, after our physical demise, we appear in some region; there we do not generally remember our past; but we may remember it, if we try, through meditation, to do so; nevertheless we suffer or enjoy some pleasure, as if we have that existence alone. Without remembering the past, we are in fact thinking that our present existence is a sporadic phenomenon, which is termed in Buddhism "Adhicca-samuppanna" in a restricted sense.

The Third Knowledge

The reminiscence continues, after the above two Knowledges, to state the Third Knowledge, which is the central kernel of the Buddhist doctrine of liberation. He says: 'Then I directed my mind to the knowledge of the Āsava-khaya. I properly and rightly knew that it is the arising of suffering, that it is the cessation of suffering, and that it is the path leading to the cessation of suffering..." These are, in short, the Four Noble Truths. The direct experience of the third truth, in terms of meditation, would be the ninth trance, wherein all perceptions and feelings are absent. But for such an insight a thorough deliberation of the chain of causation would be necessary.

This is in effect his third discovery. Substantially the first discovery of the natural trance organized and dwelt in by him long before in Kapilavastu was the basis of his later discoveries. For, the First Trance he attained in his homeland was free from all the later doctrines. It received none of the doctrinal tenets. The claimax of his long meditative endeavours was the Bodhi (enlightenment) said to have been attained, by the Bodhisatto, under the Bodhi tree. But the beginning of Bodhi under the rose-apple tree in Kapilavastu is lost sight of and ignored in the Pāli Canon and commentaries. It is clear, from the twenty verses uttered before the Bodhisattva by Hri-deva accompanied by many devas, that the Bodhisattva had been

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living in the joy of trance (Dhyāna-saukhya) even in his household life. He said: "Your idea of renunciation after the passing of youth does not become you. It is better that you should renounce the household life in the first stage of youth." He further says: "Although it is true that the former Bodhisattvas lived in the enjoyment of the inner palace, you should become the foremost, and not the hindmost, amongst them." Just before this also, when the palace music had been turned by higher Beings into a grand remonstrance, the Bodhisattva had also re-converted it or mixed with it in such a manner that almost all the terms of Bodhi were heard therefrom. We cannot however say which version is to be taken as correct. The above version is from Chapter 13 of the *Lalita-vistara*, one of the nine sacred books of Nepal.

Metaphysical Questions

The Buddha was unduly criticised, by non-Buddhist philosophers, scholars, and theologians, for his so-called lack of elaboration of metaphysical questions. But his discourses reveal that he is neither an agnostic, nor even an atheist in a real sense, nor an escapist. He seems to be a pragmatic, or an eclectic, or a syncretic so far as social matters are concerned. The rules of conduct for the monks and the lay disciples are before us as clear examples. The golden mean between two extremes is another example. The via media in his system of meditation and insight is not, however, to be understood in an ordinary sense; it has a deep significance; he has never tolerated anything short of or lower than what he held as fundamental and essential. He was also not always silent on metaphysical questions. He never said that he did not know the answers to these questions. He had actually touched upon each of them from several points of view, and shown that discussions on them led nowhere.

BUDDHISM AS A SYSTEM OF PHILOLOPHY

His Silence

Philosophy must explain every phenomenon occurring in the world, known or unknown, conscious or unconscious, material

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or immaterial, physical, finally concerning heaven or hell. If it enunciates any fundamental law, it should be of universal application. Moreover, in consonance with the invariable oriental custom, it should state the system in substance and refute all extant systems of philosophy other than its own. The Buddha has done so in many suttas. It is based upon his own meditative experience, and not accomplished merely through his mental deliberations. So we do not find clear statements on these points.

Some of his disciples were sometimes so vexed at these points which were left unexplained that they put straight questions to the Master and wanted categorical answers from him. They got only reproof from him. According to our philosophical standards, such a position of the Master may seem untenable. But his meditative experience might have seen ample reasons for doing so. He used to say that such questions were not conducive to meditation, nor to any real and profitable insight. On other occasions, he said to his select disciples that such questions had several facets for deliberation.

Our Expectation

We cannot think even now that the Buddha was not alive to such serious subjects. He knew that many scholars and even his own monks and lay disciples were desirous of straight answers to such fundamental questions from the Master himself. He never said that he held agnostic views on these subjects. He always maintained that his own achievement was beyond the comprehension and logic of the common people. Therefore, we cannot assume that he himself was in doubt and uncertainty concerning these so-called metaphysical questions and their real import.

Some Conjectures

Some renowned scholars have tried to recognize their pet theories in the Buddha's thinking. This is quite unfair to the Master. He is not now among us to refute their false and intentionally wrong views. He is a human being, and not an incarnation of some supreme God. He has nothing to do with any sacred book, except what he regards as one containing a

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true teaching conducive to lead one to Nibbāna. He never believed that there was anyone or anything higher than what he experienced in his normal, formal, formless, or supra-mundane trances, or insight, knowledges, or even Nibbāna. He is a Buddha, the highest of the higher Beings, human or divine, whomever we can conceive of or imagine. But he is simply a human being.

His System of Philosophy

As a system of philosophy, he has left us a unique chain of causation consisting of 12 links, each depending upon the next in sequence for its origination. For this reason it is better known as a chain of dependent origination "Idap-paccayatā Paticcasumuppādo" in Pāli. It is universal. There are no exceptions to it. It is in perpetual motion until its total cessation in Nibbāna or complete liberation. Each link is modified at every rotation. No link remains the same at any two moments. It is evidently a development of the four noble truths. It is further developed in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, in the last voluminous book of which it is associated with 24 conditions "paccaya" or concomitant factors. Such an exhaustive system is not found in any other system of philosophy.

PHASES OF THIS RESEARCH

The First Phase

Such a vast field of research, as the Buddha's system of meditation, could not have been undertaken at a stretch. Therefore, several phases were contemplated for dealing with this subject. This is the first phase. It mainly deals with the first stage of the Buddha's own meditative experience. The identical words and sentences, in which it is found expressed in the Buddhist Texts, convince us of its authenticity. Later developments and philosophical considerations have however obscured this fundamental stage so much as to divert our attention from this most important issue to other dazzling facets of Buddhism.

Hence this first stage has been fully explained in this first phase of our research. It is based on the original sources, such as Pāli, mixed Sanskrit, and other texts. Pāli commentaries

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have been consulted, but not fully depended upon. Efforts have been made to find the meaning of important technical words from the Canonical Texts themselves, wherever possible. References from other sources have also been utilized whenever they were easily available.

Our principal aim has been to present this fundamental stage as a practical guide to intending amateurs of meditation as well as a help to savants accustomed to thinking often along philosophical lines. It will also be an eye-opener to those scholars who take the commentaries for the texts and think that there is no room for further improvements beyond the extant commentaries on Buddhism.

This phase will also be useful for a comprehension of meditation specially in the form plane (rūpāvacara). Moreover it will give the reader an insight into the norm of meditation, with which other systems of meditation can be easily compared and evaluated. The first stage of meditation is the key to the succeeding three stages, culminating in the fourth Jhāna or Trance.

The fourth Jhāna is regarded as multi-purpose. It is made a base for organising supernormal powers, supernatural seeing and hearing, formless trances, and also supramundane insight. This phase does not get itself involved with any metaphysical questions, nor with any doctrinal or religious points. It concerns itself with a purely meditational approach to the Buddha's system of meditation, apart from other facets of Buddhism.

With a view to facilitating a comparative study on a small scale, a few references from other methods and schools of meditation have been given in appropriate places. Hence this phase will be useful for an amateur, or even for a scholar, of any faith or religion, or free-thinking. On account of its being a well-tried basis for cultivating the mind, it will be equally profitable in any walk of life, to which a purified and powerful mind is a pre-requisite.

Later Phases

As a logical sequence to the first phase dealing with the form plane, the second phase is intended to contain the treatment of the trances on the formless plane. Such a gradual procedure

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will make it easy to understand the system being investigated. When the first stage of trance dealt with in the first phase has been reasonably well understood, such an intended second phase should not be hard to organize or at least to comprehend clearly.

Thereafter, the further phases to be dealt with will gradually include the rest of the kammaṭ-ṭhānas or meditational devices; of which the meditation on respiration and the physical body and thereafter the organization of super-normal powers will be studied; but it must be understood that such a method on these powers is for comparative study with the yoga system and with the lives of those saints who are known to have acquired some of these powers.

The last phase will be devoted to the summum bonum of Buddhism, Nibbāna. It is from the meditative point of view the cessation of consciousness and feeling. From the view-point of higher Buddhist tenets, it is an insight into liberation, the stages of which are in effect four. If the gradual process leads one to this Cessation of Consciousness and Feeling, one rises from it as an earner of the third stage, or as one who will gradually pass into Nibbāna and, according to the Canon, will never have to return to this material world.

SOURCES AND MATERIALS

The Pali Canon

The original source for such a research study is without doubt the extant Pāli *Tipiṭaka* consisting of three piṭakas or collections, viz., *Vinaya* or rules of conduct, *Sutta* or discourses, and *Abhidhamma* or philosophical classifications. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* consists of five books in five volumes in the Devānagari script and a small book of recitation named the *Patimokkha* not counted as a separate book. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* consists of seven books in 13 volumes. The *Sutta Piṭaka* consists of five Nikāyas, Āgamas, or Sangītis. These are twenty books in 23 volumes. Moreover, in the Nidāna-kathā of the *Aṭṭhasālini*, it is said that, excepting the first four Nikāyas, the fifth Khuddak Nikāya includes all the rest of the words of

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the Buddha. In addition to these, the last Nikāya therefore includes, according to the *Aṭṭhasālini*, the whole of *Vinya Piṭaka* and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. So in the effect the *Sutta Piṭaka* contains the whole of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*, now available in 41 volumes in the Devanāgari script. It is already available in Sinhalese, Siamese, Burmese, Roman, and other scripts as well.

The Mixed Sanskrit Texts

The *Mahā-vastu-avadāna* and the *Lalita-vistara* are most useful for comparative study for our research. Besides these two works, the *Divya-avadāna* and *Aśoka-avadāna-mālā* give us useful information. The nine sacred books of Nepal, one of which is the *Lalita-vistara*, can be of use for providing different versions from those of Pāli.

Non-canonical Works

The *Milinda-Pānha* or the Questions of Milinda in Pāli is useful for several reasons. It closely follows the Pāli tradition with some variations representing some older traditions. Pāli Commentaries may be included under this sub-heading, but it would be better to place them under a separate sub-heading.

Pali Commentaries

Buddhaghoṣa's commentaries on almost all the books of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* are very important and valuable for any research on Buddhism. He wrote the *Visuddhi-magga* as a reference work to be consulted for the topics dealt with herein during the study of his commentaries. The commentaries are full of explanation, legends, and similes. They are indispensable for any research in the Pāli tradition. Written in a way similar to that of the *Visuddhi-magga* is the book named *Vimutti-magga* in English translation from its Chinese version called *Gedatsu Dō Ron*. The original work is said to have been written by a certain monk named Upatissa. Among many later Pāli works, the *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaho* of Anuruddha is very useful.

Sanskrit Works

The *Buddha-carita* by Aśvaghoṣa gives accounts of the

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Buddha's early life up to his attainment of Bodhi in 14 cantos; that much is available in his original Sanskrit poems; the rest (14 cantos) is a retranslation from successive re-translations; so the latter portion cannot be of much use for our purpose.

The commentary of Vyāsa on the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali is of importance for a comparative study of the meditative system under study. The mode of expression in Vyāsa-Bhāyṣa is in some places so similar to that of Pāli and Mixed Sanskrit that we cannot but think that the former knew the latter well enough to criticise it.

English Translations

Some sources now found in Tibetan and Chinese only have been translated into English. These translations or re-translations are very useful for comparison with the Pāli and Mixed Sanskrit versions. Some critical works of learned scholars, available in English, also are very useful for a critical approach towards our ancient traditional disposition of reverence shown to any sacred work without objective scrutiny. I have profited from such critical works and am very thankful to their learned writers. But I have also differed from the opinions expressed by them regarding the import of the Buddhist Texts and extant commentaries. Unfortunately for us, with my profound apology also, most of these learned scholars appear to have shown little substantial interest in the Buddha's system of meditation; nor do they appear to have tried to seek the foundation on which the Master developed the unique path of the cessation of suffering through meditation and insight. We come across several suttas in the Canon, in which the Master is reported to have expressed his unwillingness to discuss a deeper topic further with the then scholars, telling them that their different bent of mind would not grasp the purport of his further exposition. Let us not resent it.

MISCELLANY—TEXT AND TERMS

I have refrained from quoting textual portions in the original Pāli and Sanskrit, but been content with their English translation only. Technical terms have also been sparingly used.

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Enough reference has been given to locate the relevant places in the original works. The list of abbreviations to works in Pāli and Sanskrit is often felt to be a disturbing factor; hence the titles and headings of the works have been given, even at some risk of displeasure, just enough to identify them; such a procedure will also enable the reader to remember their titles or names quite easily.

Pronunciation and Transliteration

The pronunciation of Pāli words is very simple. It is sufficient to use six vowels: a, ā, i, u, e, o; the remaining two ī and ū, are long, like ā. These latter two long vowels (ī and ū at the end of a word) present no difficulty; hence I have often left them unmarked, when they occurred as a final vowel in words. But the long vowel ā should be carefully pronounced as "a" in father, or in mama. No consonant is silent.

In Sanskrit, there are two more long diphthongs—ai, au; they are in fact lengthened versions of—e, o, respectively. There is a cerebral vowel r in Sanskrit, which is usually pronounced as "ri"; hence I have given it as "ri".

Pāli consonants are generally pronounced as in English with certain exceptions. C stands for ch as in church; g is always hard as in go, get, give; s is a single dental sibilant used in Pāli; unmarked t, d, are simply dentals and pronounced as in Latin and French; a dot mark under them thus ṭ ḍ indicates that they are to be pronounced as cerebrals as in English. Aspirated sounds are always followed by "h", kh, ch, jh, th, ḍh, th, dh, ph, bh. The five letters—f, q, w, x, z,—— are now not used in the transliteration of Pāli and Sanskrit words.

The nasal sound of "n" marked in three categories is not as difficult as it seems. It is modified by the following consonant. It may be guttural, with a dot above it, marked ṅ, sounded as *ng* in *king* and *sing*; when it is cerebral, with a dot below it, it is marked ṇ and sounded as *n* in *paint*; when it is marked with a tiny curve above it, ñ, it is to show that it is palatal; this last letter is frequently used in Pāli and sounds like the first n in onion.

In Sanskrit, the consonant s is not only dental; it has two more sounds; cerebral sound with a dot below it, marked as ṣ;

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palatal sound with a slant above it, marked as ś; both of these sounds should be clearly pronounced in Sanskrit to avoid confusion. In Sanskrit and Pāli, an anusvāra or a nasal occurring is invariably used with a superscript dot before the letters—y, r, l, v, s (and ṣ, ś in Sanskrit only),—the sound of which varies according to local usage or tradition. In Pāli, it sounds as a guttural ṅ. I have however indicated it simply without a mark as n or m. In Sanskrit, there are two conjoint letters, kṣ and jñ they are commonly pronounced in Nepal as *chy* and *gy*, respectively.

In words more or less anglicized, I have retained their usual forms; for example Shakya, Rishi, Shuddhodana, Brahman, Nepal, etc. This short description, enough to pronounce the few original terms and quotations herein, will be helpful to the reader. For a longer one he may be recommended to consult the preliminary chapter on the sound system of Pāli and Sanskrit in any grammatical work.

Spelling

Pāli and Sanskrit words often are differently spelt. They have sometimes a like sound, if the Pali word be given in its nominative singular, and masculine form. For example, the word 'Bodhisattva' in Sanskrit has almost a similar sound in 'Bodhisatto' rather than 'Bodhisatta' in Pāli. The Pāli word 'Bodhisatto' is in the nominative singular form; for this reason this spelling of the word in Pāli was often adopted, side by side with the Sanskrit word 'Bodhisattva'. This nominative form in spelling was also often used with respect to the names of the Pāli works, the *Visuddhi-maggo*, the *Paṭisambhidā-maggo*, etc., in order to differentiate them from the *Vimutti-magga*, the Pāli original of which is so far not available and we have at present only the English translation of its Chinese version. Sometimes for the sake of clearness the Pāli names of some presons have been spelt in the nominative singular form, for instance, Sunakkhatto Licchaviputto.

Translation of Titles of Works

The original names in Sanskrit and Pāli have been sparingly given. Instead, the titles mostly of the commentaries have been

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indicated simply by words such as 'commentary, sub-commentary, annotation', etc. appended to the text concerned. Sometimes the Pāli title as '*Milinda Pānha*' (Milinda Questions) had to be translated variously as 'King Milinda's Questions of King Milinda', etc., for the sake of clearness.

References to the Buddha

The Buddha had three stages of designation. From the birth to his renunciation, he is called the Shākya Prince, Siddhārtha in Sanskrit and Siddhattho in Pāli. From the wandering to his enlightenment, he is called the Bodhisattva in Sanskrit and Bodhisatto in Pāli. After his enlightenment, he is invariably known as the Buddha. He called himself however 'Tathāgata', his disciples addressed him as 'Bhagavā (the Blessed One), others called him 'Gotama' in Pāli ('Gautama' in Sanskrit), and the monks referred to him as 'Satthā' (the Master) in Pāli and Śāstā' in Sanskrit. I have however adopted the word 'Master' for clearness.

Conclusion

This short introduction will not be complete without mentioning the fact that my humblest and most grateful emotion follows in spirit that of great savants. They are many; their introductory verses are expressive of their heart-felt salutations and thanksgiving; I have also such feelings overflooding my heart and trying to find an outlet to overflow.

Homage to the Discoverer of Natural Meditation that prompted me to follow it up in imitation!

Salutation to All Enlightened Great Beings Past, Present, and Future!

Respects to all Savants who have devoted their life-long energy to the study, exegetical and legendary tradition, and lastly critical exposition of the old scriptures.

Devotion to the Father of the Nation, King of Nepal, with my best reverence and emotion in tune with that of those who have felt and expressed it in the introduction of their works with respect to their revered Patrons!

Finally, good wishes to readers and apologies to scholars and revered experts in meditation, insight, and tradition!

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NOTES

[1]Vehicles: There are mainly two 'yanas' or vehicles in Buddhism. Early Buddhism is known as the 'Thera-vada' or the doctrine of the elders. This division was later given the name of 'Hina-yana' or the 'lesser vehicle' by the other division of Buddhism which called itself 'Maha-yana' or the 'greater vehicle'. The difference between the two vehicles lies, broadly speaking, in the final objective to be attained by the follower of Buddhism.

[2]When there was no monastery to stay in, the town that was named was made the centre for begging for alms. So the Master was then staying in the Lumbini grove and went to the town of Deva-daha Shākyas for his daily round of begging for alms.

[3]W.W. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order*, translated by W. Woodville Rockhill, p. 26. Introduction dated Lausanne June 6, 1884. First Indian Reprint 1972.

[4]W.W. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 28, 13, 14.

[5]Knowledges. There are three types of knowledge gained by the Bodhisattva beneath the Bodhi tree in Gaya. The first knowlegde was in short the knowledge of his innumerable past births. The second was knowledge or seeing of othe persons' births and deaths through his divine eyes. The third knowledge was the knowing of his own complete and perfect liberation.

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II

The First Trance

The Quest

MEDITATION IS the only means we have at our disposal to channelize our mind into ways leading to the very substratum of reality. This is because the mind is readily available to us, and we can channellize it in any way we might have a will to. Our daily experience emphasises the validity of such an assumption. For, upon this rests the common sense stemming from our social matrix that makes us responsible for whatever we do. This however involves us imperceptibly in ethical questions and gradually accumulating values attached to them.

Hence we can easily realise the import of the emphasis which the proponents of meditational schools were obliged to place on the observance of ethical rules, which were transformed into their own codes of conduct or discipline, then prevalent in society. But such an insistence upon disciplinary tenets ostensibly alien to the spirit characteristic of meditation becomes unbearable to their followers, when such rules, *pari passu* with the former, multiply in number and become rigid and unsuitable to the changing conditions of the times.

Thus the excursion into meditation, primarily individualistic, assumes a society-wide dimension. But in this transition the

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primary fervour of the quest to grasp reality down to its very foundation becomes virtually inhibited. So there appears to an amateur of meditation no alternative other than that of adopting a sort of an independent ascetic's life for the unhampered pursuit of meditation. This course was the one which our Shākya Prince ultimately resorted to.

Such a quest is further fraught with complications arising out of varied and even mutually contradictory conceptions regarding reality. These conceptions, ranging from common sense to highly sophisticated dogmas, present confusion to many, while they throw, so to say, a challenge to a select few. Among the latter our Shākyan Quester was the most prominent and successful, a pioneer not yet matched by anyone, human or divine.

This pioneer work lies scattered in fragments in Buddhist literature. They are open to collection, but difficult to arrange into an order coherent enough to give us a plausible view of this earlier system of meditation. This system was claimed by the Shākyan Master to be his own discovery and a sine qua nonpanacea for all human sufferings, gross or subtle, patent or latent, on every plane of existence conscious or unconscious, oft-repeated in the tenets of Buddhism as the noble truths (ariya-saccāni) and the causal chain of dependent origination (ida-ppaccayatā paṭicca-samuppādo).

Requisites

The exposition of such a system of meditation must include a short description of the early life of the Shākyan Discoverer. It is imperative, inasmuch as we cannot look to an imaginary person to guide us in our research, nor take the personification of idealized tenets for our guidance, nor expect a philosophical abstraction deified to give us a practical lead. As the purpose of this research is not to explore the life of the Master, we shall have to be satisfied with touching only upon those elements of his life which might appear significant to the theme being studied, and that as briefly as possible.

At the same time we are going to eschew, for reasons given below, any pre-conceptions concerning the supernatural origination, transcendental emanation, or divine incarnation imposed

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upon the Master for purposes stemming from various standpoints and ideologies. In addition, there is a curtailment of verbose panegyric, not infrequently met with in the Buddhist canon, commentary, and literature, made most unwillingly herein. This has been done in order to keep our research from straying into numerous deviations, which might be calling forth inevitable comments and remarks upon them from us, and in consequence thereof to avoid running the risk of losing the thread of the argument presented to readers.

For, it is presumably immaterial and meaningless, in the absence of the above contrivances, to undertake a research of this type, if we cherish the pre-conception of such a being whom we might regard, out of our reverence, as supernatural, transcendental, or divine; in other words, as one beyond our comprehension.

Similarly, the previous strivings ascribed to the Master and enumerated so lavishly and assiduously in the old tradition will have to be by-passed, overlooked, ignored, or omitted from our research for reasons given below. Moreover, this element is liable to discourage our present efforts in the direction of achievement as futile and insignificant.

Passive and Active

The reasons mentioned above may be stated thus: According to the Buddhistic as well as the Hindu doctrine of resultant[1] (vipāka), the accumulation of resultants produced from past actions, good or bad, meritorious or demeritorious, continues merely as a flow of passive mental moments; in other words, it runs as a passive mind in the life continuum. This passive mental current is said to run from the first moment (paṭisandhi) of the foetal germination to the last moment (cuti) of the present life-span, thus cluminating physically in death.

This passive mind is termed in the Pāli canon 'Bhavaṅga Citta,' or the mind constituting the life continuum. It is however incapable of initiating, or accelerating, by itself, any active action productive of future resultant. This statement is tantamount to an assertion that the resultant, in other words, the background of any person can never, by itself, effectively move the person forward in or pull him backward from the direction of any fruitful

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goal or pursuit of meditation, which is set, or is to be set by himself through an effort of conscious will during his present life.

There are numerous instances found in the Buddhistic Jātaka and the Hindu rebirth stories substantiating this assertion. It will however be out of place here to enumerate these instances each of considerable length in evidence. It will be enough to state here that these instances show some persons born with material affluence, due to past good actions, according to the doctrine of resultant, undergoing reverses and suffering from terrible degradations afterwards, accountable to their own actions. On the other hand, some persons are found therein, who, although born in unfavourable circumstances due to past bad actions, so to say, highly prospering in the after-world.

These changes of fortune in such persons are generally explained in these stories in terms of the theory of action (kamma). The sum-total of this vast theory can be understood to imply that the action consciously willed and performed bears its appropriate fruit in the shape of the resultant (vipāka). The resultant does not, in its turn, bear any new fruit or resultant. If it were not so, a good result would go on giving new and new results of the good category, while a bad one would bear ever bad results. We are not going to indulge in doctrinal discussions here. But, so far as meditational psychology is concerned, it is clearly stated that each and every step in meditation is included in an active mental process. It can be neither created, nor smothered by a mere accumulation of resultants good or bad, as the case may be, come down to us as if in the shape of inheritance.

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that meditation, as an active mental process of direct realisation, is neither an excursion into a philosophical labyrinth, nor an indulgence in hair-splitting erudition, nor even a knowledge acquired from others. It is, on the other hand, a continuous process of consciously cultivating the mind. The potentialities of this active mental process are generally held in every school of meditation to be immense. Hence first and foremost, we shall try to explore the nature of such a mind and see what the Buddha himself has said about it.

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Nature of the Mind

The nature of the mind is, fortunately for us, found pithily expressed, by the Buddha himself, in four short suttas. These suttas are given in the fifth and sixth section (vaggas) of the 'Ekaka Nipāta', or one-topic chapter, in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* or the Numerical Collection, included in the *Sutta Piṭaka*, or the Basket of Discourses, of the Pāli Canon. This pithy expression is exceptionally significant for anyone who is bent upon practising meditation to the stage at least of the form (rūpāvacara) category. Metaphysically viewed, it would seem to be a perplexing mental characteristic; but, if it be taken as a mental phenomenon, it is of utmost importance to all the aspirants of meditation. The Pāli commentary on these suttas tries to explain these suttas technically, but fails to give us a satisfactory explanation of this mental nature.

Another version of these Pāli suttas is obviously discernible in the four verses of the last chapter, entitled 'Sagāthakam', verse-cum-verse, of the 'Laṅkāvatara Sutram', one of the Nine Dharmas of Nepal. The commentary on these verses is not available. Dr. D.T. Suzuki's scholarly translation in English is, with apology, no more elucidatory than the cryptic text.

There is an expression of similar import found in the commentary, named *'Vyāsa-bhāsya,'* on the *Yoga-Sūtra* of sage Patañjali. It appears to be quite appropriate in that work in consonance with the metaphysical theory of the mental element held in the Yoga and Sāṅkhya philosophy. But what is perplexing therein is the nature of the mind stated in a general manner. It resembles, to all appearances, the expression found in Pāli, at least in its general application.

Since this topic is, as mentioned above, exceptionally significant for meditation, we shall have to deal patiently with it. It will be of great help to us in explaining and also in understanding the psychic phenomena of the trance (Jhāna) in the form plane (rūpāvacara), the main theme of this first phase of our research. A discussion on this topic here will save us some confusion likely to confront us during our investigation of the meditative process.

Nevertheless we should not make a quick decision on the Buddha's position in any kind of dogmatism. His position has

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been made explicit especially in two opening suttas, each of the two principal Sutta Nikāyas, Dīgha and Majjhima, of the Canon. Since the discussion on the two suttas might land us in highly complicated philosophical questions, we shall keep it in reserve for the last phase of our Research, wherein we propose to treat of the Nibbāna in its various conceptions. If the Master's views are correctly reproduced, or substantially reflected in the two suttas, viz., 'Brahma-jāla' and 'Mūla-pariyāya', we can be fairly certain that the nature of the mind here spoken of is in its mental phenomenal aspect, and not in its metaphysical sense.

Pali Text and Commentary

The Pāli Suttas mentioned above are given below in English (my translation): "Pabhassaram idam Bhikkave cittam...", 'Brilliant is, O Monks, this mind; it is verily defiled by the incidental (āgantuka, literally incoming) defilements (upakkilesa)'. 'Brilliant is, O Monks, this mind; it is verily released (Vippa-muttam) from the incidental defilements.'

Brilliant is, O Monks, this mind; it is verily defiled by the incidental defilements; it is not properly understood by the common people (puthu-jjana) unacquainted with this; hence there is no meditation of the mind (citta-bhāvanā, literally mind-meditating) in such people, I declare.'

'Brilliant is, O Monks, this mind; it is verily released from the incidental defilements; having heard this, the noble disciple properly understands it; hence there is the meditation of the mind in such a noble disciple, I declare.'

—Ekaka Nipāta, *Aṅguttara Nikāya*

The substance of these four suttas can be condensed into a single idea thus: This mind is brilliantly clear and defilements are incidental; meditation of the mind consists in understanding this properly.

Here the main principle is one of universal application that the mind is brilliantly clear or pure by nature. It is defiled by or released from incidental defilements only. Hence meditation is natural in the mind or to the mind; in order to understand the face that the defilement is incidental, one must be watchful to check it; hence meditation assumes an active role of being

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constantly watchful to or of incidentals. Thus we can see that the nature of the mind is made stable only by an alertness of an active mind.

This necessity of mental activity is in consonance with the Master's oft-repeated warning to his disciples. But the question remains as it is, about the nature of the mind being brilliant, that is, free from impurities. This theory is apparently hard to digest. The master cannot be conceived to have uttered such a dogmatic pronouncement.

The Pāli commentator has given us a long comment on these suttas. He calls this naturally pure mind "bhavaṅga citta", or the passive mind. But he does not give us any exposition of this mind, as to how it should be naturally pure. He has dwelt on some words, such as 'puthujjana', at some length; but he passes on without clarifying this most important point. To all appearances, these four suttas seem to be extracts taken from some longer ones. These longer extracts were probably lost. As no other 'cittas' showed any correspondence to such a naturally pure mind, 'bhavaṅga citta' was selected to fill the gap. It will be made clear later on that this selection does not fit in the gap.

A critical study of this phenomenon cannot be undertaken till we have seen the picture of this mind as clearly as possible from available sources. It has been already said that discussion on this topic is necessary to understand and practise meditation of the type called the four trances (cattāri jhānāni) on the form plane (rūpāvacara).

The text relating to this mind must be genuine, inasmuch as the old Sinhalese tradition, preserved in the Pāli commentary by Buddhaghoṣa, bears irrefutable evidence of it. In the *Manorathapūrāṇi*, the commentary on the *Aṅguttāra-Nikāya*, these four suttas are duly commented upon. The scholastic method of the comments is however too technical to be literally reproduced here in translation, because we would need the original text as well to follow the comments fruitfully or meaningfully.

The gist of the comments on these suttas is given below.

'Pabhassaram' means clearly white, fully pure. 'Cittam' means the 'bhavaṅga cittam'. Is there any colour of the mind? No there is none, any one of the blue etc., whether it be with

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or without colour....being fully pure (any colour is fully pure) and is called 'pabhassaram'; similarly, owing to the absence of defilements, this is also 'pabhassaram.' It is the 'bhavaṅga cittam.'

Here the commentator gives a long simile for comparison, and says:

'Bhavaṅga cittam' is to be seen as parents and preceptors and teachers endowed with good character, as in the simile. If they do not threaten, teach, and discipline their sons, or students, or companions, they fall into disrepute due to the bad conduct of the latter. Similarly, the 'bhavaṅga cittam', even if it is naturally pure totally from arising and incoming defilements, is given the epithet 'defiled', due to minds afflicted by greed, etc., arising at the moment of 'Javana.'

In the next case the same kind of simile on the good and reputable side is given; then it (the bhavaṅga citta) is given the epithet of 'released' due to minds associated with non-moral and morally good categories, arising at the moment of 'Javana'. The presence and absence of 'citta-bhāvanā' is given as applicable to the latter and former cases, respectively. However, in the latter case, he says: "In this sutta strong 'vipassanā (truth-penetrating meditation) is described, but some say that it is 'taruṇa' (weak) vipassanā."

The first of these suttas is also found, as a quotation, in the commentary on the first book of the *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka*. It is given twice, once in the 45th section of the third division dealing with the mind, and again in section 274 of the same division. In the latter it is thus explained: "Here the mind (citta) is described as the heart (hadayam) in the internal meaning. It is clear in the sense of being pure. This is said with reference to Bhavaṅga. As (the Buddha) said: 'Brilliant is, O Monks this mind; it is verily defiled by the incidental defilements.'

'Bhavaṅga', as mentioned above, is a term used in Buddhist psychology. Literally, it means a constituent of one's own life. In psychology it is a resultant mind that flows in a current of mental moments throughout one's life-span. It is, as such, passive and inert. The question then arises as to how and why

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this passive mind is naturally brilliant, clear, or pure and primarily undefiled, until and unless it is defiled by incidental defilements. We shall take up this term again in our treatment of meditative psychology.

'Javana' is also a term in psychology. It is an impulse, a run, or an acceleration of the active mind in the process of cognition and conation. An effective motive occurs here. This term will be dealt with in the psychology section later on.

Mixed Sanskrit Text[2]

The four verses, mentioned above as a version of these Pāli suttas, are worth reproducing here in substance to facilitate the comparison of relevant portions. They are as follows (my translation):

"Prakriti-prabhāsvaram cittam', the naturally brilliant mind, is the pure interior (garbha, womb) of the Buddha (Tathāgata); it is verily the substratum (upādānam) of the being (sattva), which is devoid of both the extremes, limited and unlimited." (Verse No. 750).

"Prakriti-prabhāsvaram cittam', the naturally brilliant mind is, through the defilements of mind (manas, heart) etc., associated with oneself; preaches thus the excellent preceptor (the Buddha). (Verse No. 753).

"The naturally brilliant mind has mind (manas, heart) etc. as its counterpart (para); actions are accumulated by them (mind, etc.); by this, both of these are defiled. (Verse No. 754).

"Through incidental and beginningless defilements, the brilliant self (ātmā) is defiled; deprived of these it is purified like the cloth." (Verse No. 755).[3]

Apart from doctrinal differences, the ideas expressed in these verses fairly compare with those of the suttas. Dr. D.T. Suzuki's translation of these verses varies from mine in form and meaning. Nevertheless our purpose will be fulfilled, if we can trace the idea of the naturally brilliant, or 'primarily pure' mind to its earlier source.

Yoga Commentary

Now we shall take up the commentary of the Sage Vyāsa

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on the *Yoga Sūtra* as mentioned above. The characteristic sentence is as follows:

"Buddhi-sattvam hi bhāsvaram ākāśa-kalpam", the mind-element is verily brilliant and sky-like. This sentence occurs in the comment of the thirty-sixth sūtra in the first part of the *Yoga-Sūtra*. We have, firstly to determine the exact meaning of the word, 'Buddhi-sattvam' for our purpose. Vācaspati Miśra, a famous interpreter of ancient commentaries, interprets the words thus: "By the word 'buddhi', 'manas' (mind) is to be understood here, and not 'mahat-tattvam' (the first transformation and manifestation of the material substratum of the world (prakriti)). 'Ākāśa-kalpam' means pervading." Another interpreter, Vijñāna-Bhikṣu, says: "The sattva, appearing in the form of the buddhi, is brilliant; it is illuminative of one's own self and others as the light is; it becomes pervasive like the sky as well."

The word 'sattva' meaning a being or an entity is also found in other words. Bhoja-deva, another interpreter, mentions 'Citta-sattvam' as equivalent to 'buddhi-sattvam', in this context. Prof. J. H. Woods, in his English version of the *Yogasūtra, Vyāsa-Bhāṣya*, and Vācaspati's explanation, translates the relevant phrase thus: "The sattva of the thinking-substance becomes resplendent and all-pervasive like the air (ākāśa)," in the commentary of Vyāsa. With respect to the explanation or interpretation of Vācaspati Miśra, he writes: "The words—like the air—describe its pervasive character...And here thinking-substance (buddhi) is understood to be the central organ (manas) and not the Great Principle (mahat-tattva)."

Argument

Comparing these points of view concerning the nature of the mind, we see a general agreement on its being brilliant, clear, or pure. But the fundamental question remains unanswered. It is not solved satisfactorily, unless and until such a mind is specified. There may arise a few more questions supplementary to the main. We may feel inquisitive about the mind's steadiness and omniscience also, if the mind is accepted to be naturally bright, clear, or pure.

We learn, from numerous discourses or suttas of the canon,

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that the Master taught his disciples to purify and steady the mind by hard exercise and austere practices. The way to omniscience is still harder and more difficult. If the nature of the passive mind were such, as is cryptically stated here and complacently understood, all the labours devoted to cultivating the mind would have been apparently superfluous. This is not so; the word 'pabhassaram' has been used, in the 5th part of the *Samyutta Nikāya*, or the Collection of Connected Discourses, and also in the 10th section (vagga) of the Tika (three-topic) Nipāta of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* of the Pāli Canon, with the meaning presumed by me above and stated below.

The commentary on the First Book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, in the course of a lengthy discussion on the exact category of the word 'middha' (torpor), mentions the relevant portion from the above-named text as follows:

"Defiled by these five defilements (termed 'nīvaraṇa', or hindrances to the First Trance), the mind (citta) becomes neither soft, nor workable, nor 'pabhassaram' . . . etc."

In the 10th and 11th suttas of the above-mentioned section of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, an appropriate simile of purifying gold is given, and the simile is applied to the similar process of purifying the mind for the attainment and sublimation, steadying and channellizing of the trance (samādhi). In both the simile and the statement of the meditating mind, the word 'pabhassara' occurs. "As in the case of a goldsmith or his assistant", to quote the simile, "he or his assistant from time to time . . . (performs each step of the process of purifying the gold). Then that gold becomes soft, workable, 'pabhassara', and not brittle; it becomes wholly ready for work . . . (whatever ornaments he desires to make therefrom), he achieves his purpose."

Applying the above simile to the object of his precept, the Master dwells on the need of undertaking from time to time each factor of the process of purifying the meditative mind and says: "Then the mind becomes soft, workable, 'pabhassaram', and not brittle (pabhaṅgu); it becomes wholly concentrated in trance for the destruction of 'āsavas' (impediments to complete liberation). The commentary on these two stuttas explains several selected words of the text and a few technical terms in

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consonance with the Buddhist tenets. But it does not explain the word 'pabhassaram' here, nor mention 'bhavaṅga citta' any more.

Comprehensible and Incomprehensible

From this discussion we have learnt that we must not put implicit faith in any disconnected piece even of an authoritative text and likewise in a commentary. This lesson will presumably be of great service to us in the exposition of the thesis under research. It is also to remind the readers that our avowed purpose is to present this phase in a form easily understandable and of use to anyone desirous of practising the Buddha's system of meditation. At first sight this idea may appear preposterous to our pre-conceptions regarding the Buddha. He has been regarded as something beyond our reach and comprehension. This supposition may be true, so far as his final achievements are concerned.

But, if we follow his earlier life step by step, we scarcely see anything that is not comprehensible. His reminiscences clearly show his human traits not totally alien to our own. We are certainly dwarfed by his stature, heightened partly by his own endeavour and partly by our ever increasing deification of him. Even his best disciples, such as Sāri-putta and Moggallana, were reprimanded by him, when their remarks touching upon his person, knowledge, or achievement fell short of his expectation.

The supernatural visits from and to him are perplexing to us in the modern context of our present conceptions and dispositions. But, in the preceding ages and ideologies, those events were as natural to the members of the then flourishing human society, as such things are now unnatural to us. Our hypersensitiveness to such phenomena must, however, not prevent us from exploring this virgin soil which promises such a good harvest.

Miracles are the next hurdle we have to cross, if possible, unconcernedly. But it is difficult to do so without losing some links that are indispensable to the whole picture of Buddhism and thus to this research. For, miracles point out some events, thought or regarded as most important. They represent at

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least the emphasis placed on certain events to warn us not to miss or neglect them.

A few such instances are the miracles surrounding the First Trance discovered and dwelt in by the Shākyan Prince, while he was still leading a householder's life in his homeland. The Southern School of Buddhism, or the Pāli Tradition, tried to suppress them, so to say, in the canon, only to revive them in the commentary. In doing so also, the School failed, for unknown reasons, to present the events in a manner befitting it. On the other hand, the Northern School, or the Mixed Sanskrit Tradition, recorded a long version of this important event.

The former School could not have thought it to be spurious, inasmuch as the School had preserved it faithfully in the canon, as a short reflection of the reminiscence. We shall discuss this later on. It is also surprising that the School did not try to give us a better treatment of the early life of the Prince, while the Northern School had so much more to say about it. We would have stood upon firmer ground concerning this aspect, had the Southern tradition been less rigid in this respect. It cannot be ascribed to an intolerance of the other schools; for the *Kathā-vatthu*, the Book of Controversy, relates the views of other schools in such a courteous way. And the huge commentatorial literature also includes obviously later portions that are so attractive and elucidatory.

The most baffling portion of the Buddhist canon and commentary is the mention and description of the Pacceka Buddhas and previous Buddhas. The Southern School records the earliest Buddha as 'Dīpaṅkara', while the Northern School, at any rate, places 'Candra-Sūrya-Pradīpa' as the earliest of the Buddhas. In one of the Books constituting the Nine Dharmas of Nepal, entitled the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarika*, the Lotus of the True-dharma, the name of this Buddha is given. It is related that there followed, one by one, a long succession of Buddhas of the same name. The last of them had eight sons, who were entrusted to a Bodhisattva named Vara-Prabha. This Bodhisattva had eight hundred pupils, besides the eight sons entrusted to him. Excepting one of the eight sons, all his pupils became Buddhas, one after another. The last of them was the Buddha Dīpaṅkara.

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Although three more Buddhas preceding Dīpaṅkara are mentioned by name in Pāli, the above description stupefies us beyond measure. We have also numerous pacceka-buddhas in both the schools. Thus we have to limit ourselves to one Buddha, if we are to keep our sanity. It is the Buddha Shākya Muni of our time we are quite sure of. We have also some accounts of a biographical and autobiographical nature to guide us in tracing the source of his achievement to his own system of meditation; thus thanks are due to the Pāli and Mixed Sanskrit Canon, Commentary and Literature.

Stepping Stone

The discussion on the nature of the mind with the improvement our investigation brought to light in the preceding sections may lead us directly to the contents of the mind obtaining in a process of meditation. The discourses and precepts on, and philosophical exegeses of the Buddhist Canon, and commentatorial explanations concerning meditation have detected or differentiated five principal constituents in the first stage of meditation. It should be borne in mind that this stage is the stepping-stone to almost all the higher stages of meditation to be organised for the purpose of the attainment, either of the successive stages of trance in the form plane, or of supernatural powers and knowledge, or of the supramundane insight into Nibbāna, the summum bonum of the Buddhist Liberation. The cultivation of meditation for the attainment of supernatural powers and knowledge will be dealt with from the Third Phase onwards of this research, while that of the supramundane insight into Nibbāna will have to be treated of in the final phase.

Momentary Mind

We have to admit at the start of this section that the mind is regarded as momentary in Buddhist psychology. This statement may sound enigmatic to our common sense. But even a casual observation of our everyday mental experience will disclose that it is a medley of sensations, preception, conceptions, imaginations, memories, etc., accompanied by and associated with other concomitants such as feeling, conations, inclination, disposition, etc. It would have been better, if we could have

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proceeded without regarding it as such. For the conception of a single mind living from moment to moment is quite easy to form, whereas that of a momentary mind, or a mind of moments, smacks of dogmatism.

Dogmatism

It is hard to avoid dogmatism. Even an apparently simple and harmless statement entails a dogmatic complication. As a matter of fact, there are other plausible alternatives to this concerning the mind both in the orient and the occident, but they are not free from allegations of dogmatism. Let us take, for example, one of the common-sense views that the mind remains the same throughout our life-span. Here also we find our position to be in effect a dogmatic one. Moreover, it is not without difficulties. For they pose themselves, when we are called upon, in such a context, to explain our own mental phenomena, which exhibit different phases, such as modifications, growth, development, decay, and disappearance.

Some of us may ask naively if we can do away with any assumption whatsoever about the constitution of the mind, be it momentary, permanent, or possessive of any other property, and continue our study ignoring any concept of the mind. Even if such a procedure be not entirely impossible, it is not practicable. For, when we go ahead, we shall meet with such terms, concepts and ideas as may inevitably need remarks, comments, interpretations, etc. from us. And these will have to be met in the very same sphere of thought as the relevant text and commentary evince. But we shall try to present the matter in such a way as not to be hampered by this assumption. In fact, an amateur or even a savant of meditation has very little to do with any dogmas whatever. He will in fact go on meditating, trying to get absorbed in it, realising its equanimity, and stabilizing it as best he can.

Declaration

When a person comes down from a state of meditation to this material plane, he may give vent to his emotion in expressions of his own. These expressions may not be strictly in conformity with the accepted pattern. So far he will have little

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opposition to confront. But, if he tries to voice an opinion about his own experience, or to evaluate it in terms of any other system of meditation already established on our planet, he is sure to be criticized on each and every turn he may appear to take diverging from the accepted one. In fact, a close perusal of the two anthologies of verses, ascribed to the noble monks of both the Orders, viz., the *Thera Gāthā* and the *Theri Gatha*, discloses the individual views of their declaration regarding their liberation, in spite of the set form of their expression.

It will not be out of place to point out here the fact, that anyone in the Buddhist Order or all categories of adherents, monks or nuns or laymen, having experienced a state or a stage above this material plane, had, according to a tacit practice, to declare it to someone, in the absence of the Master. We do not, however, find any injunction or rule relating to this obligation. There is however an important rule in the *Pāti-mokkha*, or the Book of Obligatory Rules for the members of the Buddhist Order . It concerns itself with the wrong declaration of one's own experience and achievement in supernatural powers and knowledge and supramundane insight into Nibbāna (Uttari-manussa-dhamma, Alamriya-ñaṇa-dassana). The committing of such a wrong declaration entails excommunication (pārājika) unless it is due to one's wrong estimation (abhimāna) of such experience and achievement. This is obviously a negative injunction. But frequent references to the obligation of the propagation and continuance of Buddhist knowledge and practice imply the positive declaration to be incumbent upon the recipient of such an achievement.

It seems that such a declaration serves a double purpose. Firstly, one is made to contribute to the knowledge already acquired and accumulated through meditation. Secondly, one is irrevocably committed to the declaration that may help one to achieve further development. As a matter of fact, we find that the Buddha had to make such a declaration on a number of occasions. Even now it would be strictly impossible for anyone to keep silent about his actual meditative experience. It is one of our innate instincts to do this.

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Three Systems

Now to resume the discussion, the few systems of meditation extant in the world can be classified grossly into three categories conveniently for easy comprehension. They are devotional, philosophical, and intuitional. The first of the three, viz., the devotional category may include a large number of practices of meditation ranging from a method of arousing simple faith to the much sophisticated process of one's own complete assimilation with the object of devotion. It is found in almost all the religions of the world, ancient, medieval and modern. Hence it can be easily inferred that this category is regarded generally as the easiest of the three.

In Buddhism there are two kinds of practices of a devotional type. The first is the practice of remembering (anussati) several persons and objects of reverence and excellence, such as Buddha, Dhama, Saṅgha, or Master, Law, and Order; Virtue, Generosity, Divinity, etc. The second is the practice of cultivating an unswerving faith in the subtle region of bliss (Sukhāvati), or the Pure Land of Bliss lorded over by Amitābha. It is, however, to be understood in the latter case that only with faith is one said to be able to enter it. The Lord is supposed to teach and train the entrants till they attain Nibbāna, the duration of time required for such an attainment being unspecified. Since such a faith demands a complete surrender on the part of the devotee, it is not as easy as it may appear to cultivate this sort of faith in meditation.

The philosophical category is in essence a method of deliberation and concentration over the subtle content of a philosophy. It is the sort of insight held to be gained through the constant application of thought, while the consequential liberation is evaluated according to the doctrine of the philosophy concerned. In Buddhism such an attainment of insight is considered to be nothing less than Nibbāna or Nirvāṇa.

The intuitional category may include all the direct methods of realising the ultimate truth, if there be one. Meditation, if the mind of its practiser is diverted of every pre-conception and predisposition, has been long since thought to lead one to such a truth. The way to attain this truth is through meditation itself. In one of the Upaniṣads named *Yogopaniṣad*, it is said

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in one verse; "Yoga is knowable by yoga; yoga is developed through yoga; one who is not negligent of practising yoga, that one, the yogi, enjoys it for a long time." In the Sayings of the Buddha, we have also such frequent exhortations to meditation. But his pronouncements are always guarded against too sweeping a remark. One of these exhorting pronouncements can be given here from the section named 'Another Finger-Snapping' (Apara-accharā-saṅghāta) in the One-topic (Ekaka) Nipāta of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. The Master says, "Even if one lasting for a snapping of fingers, O Monks, a monk meditates upon the First Jhāna; this amounts to saying, O Monks, the monk is living not empty of Jhāna..., what is it to speak of those who develop it?" The commentary refers to the comment on a previous discourse for further information, and explains the words, 'paṭhama' and 'jhāna' in terms a little different from the usual exposition.

Fundamental Trance

This first 'jhāna' appears, to all intents and purposes, to be fundamental to all the higher stages or states of trances, to cultivating supernatural powers, to gaining deeper and supramundane knowledge and insight. In the Buddhist Canon itself the process of attaining it is not given in a practical way, in spite of the frequent repetitions of the formula-like description of this 'Jhāna' throughout the Canon. The tradition preserved in commentaries, especially in Buddhaghoṣa's work entitled the '*Visuddhi-magga*', or the Path of Purification, in Pāli, seems to have developed a system of its own. But its close scrutiny guided by one's own insight may, however, give one a clue to trace the method to its pristine prototype we are attempting through this research to discover. After comparing the latter with the former, anyone who intends to devote, or has already devoted, his time and energy to practising the meditation of the early Buddhism and in unravelling its secrets, will not fail, I believe, to detect the contrast. This contrast will plead for the naturalness and practicality of the latter over and above the former. The reason may be ascribed to the rigid disciplinarian stipulation as regards preliminaries to meditative practice, doctrinal complication at every step, and the scholastic method

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of exposition in the former. Encountering such formidable hurdles no amateur can plausibly venture to tread the untrodden ground of Buddhist meditation as yet little understood in its essence and potentiality by non-Buddhists.

However, the clue to such a maze is provided by the first trance itself. For, the trance suddenly dawned upon the mind of the Bodhisatto, Buddha-in-the-making, while he was seated cross-legged in the cool shade of a rose-apple (Jambu) tree in the agricultural field or village in the suburbs of the city of Kapilavastu. The city lay in the Shākyan territory, now situated in the mid-western terai of Nepal. This dawning of the trance upon his mind is a subject of his clear reminiscence later on after his six-year period of austerity (dukkara-kārikā, duṣkara-caryā), which he abandoned to follow up this trance to the Bodhi, or full enlightenment. This phenomenon of the trance suddenly appearing to him is not explained expressly in any of the texts. The implication of his past meritorious actions can of course be easily conjectured, but the cognition, or recognition and pursuance of this phenomenon, was decidedly an act of his own mind. This is an important factor in the psychology of meditation.

Different Versions

There are different versions of the same incidents in Buddhist literature. This trance-phenomenon is one of them. As our subject has obviously a starting point in this particular incident, we shall have patiently to take up one version after another to be given below. In passing, we may also remark that such a method of studying ancient literature will unearth many a hidden treasure to patient and persevering pioneers in research. This research is merely a collection of materials presented in a form systematic enough to evaluate the thesis under consideration. Anyone may come to his own conclusion only after reading the whole research. But my thesis is based largely on the original texts available so far, and to some extent on the intuition gained through a sort of contemplation of some four decades.

Guide

I have studiously refrained from citing the relevent pieces

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from the texts in the original version and been contented only with giving their substance in English translation. The references given will, I believe, enable scholars to find each one of them easily and quickly for verification and for the purpose of further research. A work on meditation should, in my humble opinion, be such as to make its reading conducive to generating a meditative frame of mind in the reader. If the work fails in this respect, it will be of only academic interest, adding one more work to the sphere of controversy on the subject.

The practice of meditation is strictly individual, as is evident from numerous subjects or objects for meditation, found and given in the works treating with meditation as a principal or secondary subject. Hence only one subject or object can be plausibly undertaken for practice at a time. The practice of such a nature would have to be continued for a fairly long time in order to reach, at least, a preliminary stage of the elysium the system promises to procure for the amateur or anchorite. It would therefore seem better to choose an object or subject for practice and a guide to be followed in a system of meditation, wherein the object or subject is guaranteed to have been followed expressly by the guide himself. Especially in the field of meditation, no guide better than the Buddha can be presumably obtained, whose reminiscences both earlier and later are so very practical and life-like in their expression, emotion and far-reaching effect.

No Device

From every source available at present in Buddhist literature, it is established that the Buddha had not resorted to any of the usual devices preliminary to organising the First Trance referred to in several places above. Obviously he did not offer any devotional prayer, nor undertake the telling of the beads, nor repeat any religious incantation (mantra), nor concentrate on any of the discs (kasiṇa) elemental or coloured so laboriously explained by Buddhaghosa in his work the *Visuddhi-magga*. Neither did he contemplate on a metaphysical entity, nor on a philosophical abstraction. He had of course one of the most important mental dispositions, that of distraction from the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. But the trance could only be gained through

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an active mental organization. There was evidently a big gap between the mind on the material (kāmāvacara) plane and the formal (rūpāvacara) plane.

This gap had anyhow to be filled in the absence of the Master's own words. It is therefore fairly imaginable that the earlier, or later, tradition tried to introduce into it a conjecture or an invention. Buddhaghoṣa tells us, in the commentary of the 36th Sutta of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and also in the introductory part (nidāna kathā) of the Rebirth Stories (*Jātaka-aṭṭha-kathā*), that the Bodhisatto took up the device of observing his respiration (ānāpāna) before organizing the First Trance. This is however as much a misfit as the passive mind (bhavaṅga citta) mentioned above in connection with the nature of the mind as naturally brilliant or clear (pabhassara). We shall treat this important contrivance later on. Doubtlessly it is of great service to meditationists, amateurs or savants, although he had expressed somewhat different views in his work the *Visuddhi-magga*, under the sections of Expanding-Non-expanding (vaḍḍhana-avaḍḍhana-to) and Temperamental agreeability (cariyā-anukūla-to).

Aśvaghoṣa, the great poet of the *Buddha-carita* fame, has given us, in the 5th canto of the *Buddha-carita*, probably a better conjecture. He says, "Thinking over the origin (prabhava) and the destruction (apyaya) of the world (jagat)", his mind took up for support the path of steadiness, that is, his mind became steady. This suggestion is also not satisfactory, as is implied in the Buddha's later reminiscence. Upagupta, the guide to King Aśoka's pilgrimage, does not enlighten us with any supposition on this head either in the 27th chapter (Kuṇāla) of the (*Divyāvadāna*, or in the relevant leaf (No. 55) of the *Aśokāvadāna-mālā* manuscript. Neither the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* manuscript (leaf No. 70), nor the *Lalita-vistara* (11th chapter), has anything to suggest in the matter. Even the renowned dialectician, Nāgasena, omits this point, while explaining to king Milinda the import of the Bodhisatto's reminiscence regarding the Jhāna, and austerities in the fourth part of the Milinda's Question (*Milinda-pāñha*).

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Sutta Style

This gives us a great but difficult latitude. By the way this also warns us against accepting the commentatorial expression without scrutiny and discrimination. Since this point is important to understand the thesis under research, we had to deal with this point rather unwillingly in detail. As mentioned before, such controversy is not conducive to mental equanimity. On the other hand, the mere statement of the tenet in technical words, as is evident from a perusal of the voluminous work of the Paṭṭhāna in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The sutta or discourse style of exposition generally met with in the *Dīgha* and *Majjhima Nikāyas* is what we want. For, herein we can find ourselves floating on a sort of surface of a sea smoothly but gradually diving into one layer after another. This style has been claimed by the Master to be his specific method and that rightly too.

Vitakka

To resume the discussion, we were left wondering as to how he organised the First Trance, if he did not resort to any of the usual devices previous to doing so. The answer to this will require a little more effort on our part also than that of reading between the lines of relevant texts and comments. As mentioned earlier elsewhere five principal mental factors have been detected in this trance. Two of the five factors are to our purpose signficant for organising actively a trance. The first is 'Vitakka' and the second is 'vicāra'. The meaning of these two words is scholastically given, but it is very confusing. Their equivalents found in a stereotyped fashion are not more illuminating.

But fortunately for us the first of these two words 'vitakka' is extensively dealt with in two suttas or discourses of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the 19th and 20th of the First Part. Although the word is given as a second conjoint of a compound and not as a separate word, the treatment is still very useful for determining its import on firmer ground. The first is the *Dvedhā-vitakka-sutta*, or Discourse on Bifurcated Vitakka. The Master was then staying in Sāvatthi. Addressing his disciples, the Master spoke thus: "It was verily previous, O Monks, to my

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enlighten ment when I was unenlightened and was only a Bodhisatto, this occurred to me,—why should I not practise by bifurcating and bifurcating vitakka...?" He assigned evil thoughts (vitakkas) to one category (bhāga) and good thoughts to the second one. Whenever an evil thought arose, he knew it; deliberating over it as such, the evil thought disappeared. The Master spoke further: "Verily whatever, O Monks, the disciple frequently deliberates (anu-vitakketi) over, investigates (anu-vicāreti) in, exactly that much there occurs the inclination of the mind..."

On the other hand, the good category was also noticed and understood as such by the Master. He tried this method in the daytime, at night, during both day and night. He did not discern in this any fear (bhaya). Then the Master said: "Surely, however, on account of deliberating and investigating for very long, my body would be disturbed; the mind when disturbed finds itself far from the trance (samādhi)..." Then introducing the simile of a cowherd[4] who had only to remember, 'the cows are here' when all the grains had been already harvested and carried over to the village, in the last month of summer, the Master said: "Verily thus, O Monks, I had only to remember, these are the dhammas (phenomena)."

Then the Master goes on describing his attainment, achievement and enlightenment. He further encourages his disciples with these concluding words: "These are, O Monks, tree-root-spots; these are lonely huts; meditate, O Monks, do not be negligent; be not repenters afterwards."

Comments

Commenting on this sutta, Buddhaghoṣa writes that the good thoughts, the opposites of evil ones, properly occur upto the first trance (Yāvapaṭhama-jjhānā). He further dwells on an interesting account, ostensibly a supposition, of the occasion and working of the Master's mind then. He says that, during the performance of his six-years' almost complete fasting, these good thoughts occurred to the Bodhisatto in clusters like floods in the great river. But owing to the lapse of memory (sati-sammosena) the evil thoughts, suddenly arising and obstructing the

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course (vāra) of good ones, used sometimes to become themselves the cause of evil mental acceleration (akusala javanavāra). Then the Bodhisatto thought: 'These evil thoughts obstructing the course (vāra) of good ones come to stand. Well, let me practise after dividing these vittakas into two parts...' Thus the occasion (kāla) of the Bodhisatto's controlling of the mind is thereby told and likewise should be understood. But a little later quite enigmatically in the commentary, it is said that those thoughts occurred to the Bodhisatto after his renouncement of almost complete fasting and his acceptance of nourishment when his body had fully assumed its former lustre. Again the commentator tries, quite imaginatively, to mitigate the quality and degree of those evil thoughts.

Then Buddhaghoṣa goes on to discuss the intricate topic of the interdependence of the higher insight and the mental absorption (samāpatti). The Bodhisatto's trance (samādhi), he says dogmatically, was then immature (taruṇa) and so was his insight (vipassanā). When he used to sit down for a very long time thinking over an insight, his body would ache and thereby his mind disturbed and unsteady. So he would again fall back to mental absorption and thereby make his mind subdued and reassured. This done, he would again resort to thinking over the insight. Its duration would again entail bodily fatigue and mental disturbance. And the Bodhisatto had to repeat the same process over again.

Mental absorption, he says, is very helpful to insight. Here he gives a simile of a multi-purpose wooden box, used by some special combatant, with its uses in a battle. Mental absorption is of much more help to insight, he continues to say, than the wooden box to the combatant in the simile. Although insight occurs only with the support of mental absorption, insight after becoming steady protects mental absorption and also makes it steady. Here he gives another simile of the cart and the boat and describes how the loads of both of them can be carried over by each on the land and on the water, respectively.

Mere Memory

This much of the commentary is enough to show that such a method of exposition can be of little service to us as a vade-

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mecum for meditational purposes. The text is, on the other hand, clear and encouraging. The simile of a cowherd is aptly expressive of keeping a meditative frame of mind in conscious balance, as 'these are the cows' in the simile and as 'these are the dhammas' in the text. The mere memory of the concept expressed in each of the two sentences seems to be implied by the word 'vitakka' in the text. The word, however, is open to different interpretations in conjunction with the word vicāra, the two principal components of the first trance.

A Note on Vitakka

The Pāli English Dictionary of the Pāli Text Society (1966)[5] has a very useful note on page 620 appended to the word 'vitakka'. In its 'opinion, these two words in a combination "were once used to denote one and the same thing: just thought, thinking only in an emphatic way". It might be so ordinarily, but the two terms are clearly differentiated in the initial two trances of the Buddhist Jhāna system with the five stages. The yoga system of Pātañjali with the commentary of Vyāsa has also a different meaning for each of the two. The note says further on: "With the advance in the Saṅgha of intensive study of terminology, they became distinguished mutually. Vitakka became the inception of the mind, or attending, and was no longer applied, as in the Suttas, to thinking in general." The first meaning, that is, 'the inception of the mind', although current, is not free from vagueness; while the second 'thinking in general' appears to be too wide. The concluding portion of the note is of far-reaching effect and is as follows: The explanations of Commentators are mostly of an edifying nature and based more on popular etymology than on natural psychological grounds."

Kammatthana

The next, that is, 20th sutta, is the precept of the Master to the disciples, when he was staying in Sāvatthi. Herein he tells them five means (nimittāni, kāraṇani) of avoiding evil vitakkas. The last means is characteristic of the Master and was used by him once during his six-year period of austerity. The third means is the obliterating of the evil vitakka itself, while the

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fourth one is the tracing of the evil thought to its very beginning. All these means are illustrated with apt similes. The commentary says, among other things, that there are thirty-eight[6] objects or subjects of meditation (kammaṭṭhāna) divided in the Pali text. Until a defilement arises, says the commentator, there is no need to resort to any of these means. Both in the text and the commentary it is said that the practice of these means gives one mastery over the vitakkas.

These thirty-eight (or forty in the *Visuddhimagga*) objects or subjects of meditation can be conveniently classified into seven categories. They are, to wit,

1. Ten kinds of disk (kasiṇa),
2. ten states of decomposition of a dead body,
3. ten sorts of remembrance,
4. four immeasurables (appamaññayo) or Brahma-vihāras,
5. four formless illimitables (āruppā),
6. one mood (saññā) of unagreeable taste in all incoming ingredients (āhāre paṭikkūla-saññā), and
7. one analysis (vavatthāna) of the four elements (catu-dhātu).

They are to serve only as contrivances to trance and insight and not a Buddhist target or summum bonum in themselves The numerousness of these subjects or objects with their paraphernalia should not confuse the mind of an amateur. At best, only one object is taken up at a time and even that not necessarily. For, there is no evidence in the texts that the Bodhisatto ever resorted to these contrivances previous or posterior to his Enlightenment. Buddhaghoṣa himself was seemingly no less confused; for he has given an indication of it while introducing these objects in his work.

Visuddhi-magga

Confusion naturally stems from trying to include a large amount of material into a single work and that in a commentatorial form with similes and anecdotes, instead of consolidating them systematically into an independent single whole. Buddhaghoṣa, as an expositor of the monastic school concerned, adopted the former plan. Accordingly he developed his work, the *Visuddhi-magga*, on the thesis of a single verse reportedly uttered by the Master. It was given as an answer to a question put by

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one of the departed souls who had attended a celestial life and status. This is the verse in substance: "An intelligent man (naro sa-paññō) established in virtue (sīla), contemplating on mind and intellect(paññā), solves the internal and external entanglements of the people (pajā), if the man of the Order (Bhikkhu) is vigorous (ātāpī) and ingenious (nipako)." If the verse be interpreted as it is, the meaning is simple enough. But Buddhaghoṣa took upon himself the gigantic task of exposing the entire doctrine of the Mahā-vihāra School (desanā-naya) in his work. Hence the work became in effect encyclopaedic in outlook rather than being a treatise on practical meditation.

At best the work can serve us as a compendium of Buddhism for ready reference, but not as a guide to practising meditation. Moreover, the work is meant for a bhikkhu who is born with the background, disposition, or resultant of the best of moral fundamentals (kammaja-tihetuka-paṭisandhi...). This is purely and simply a fallacy or, to all appearance, an impossibility. He admits it in a remark he makes later, viz., "To a man with such an intellect, there is nothing left for him to do; for it is already accomplished due to his previous good action."

Vimutti-magga

The *Vimutti-magga,* or the Path of Freedom, has a similar thesis. The introductory stanza in verse is found in the seventeenth section of the *Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta* in the *Digha Nikāya* and also in the first ustta of the Four-Topic (Catukka) *Nipāta* of the *Aṅgutara Nikāya*. The place, circumstance and wordings of both these suttas are identical. The place was Bhaṇḍa-gāma in the Vajji country, one day's journey from Vesāli, the capital. The Master is reported to have uttered this verse. But the wordings of this and especially those of the next verse are ambiguous and might even imply that the verse occurred after the passing away of the Master. The spirit of this and that of the *Vsuddhi-magga's* verse are the same. The writer, Upatissa, expounding this sutta, says: "He who wished... to be rid of birth, old age and death,...to achieve...Nibbāna..., should be versed in the Sutta. Abhidhamma and Vinaya. This is the Path of Freedom." Evidently the demand is too much

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and the writer makes the condition almost impossible. The position of these two writers seems to be intentional. They had to raise the monastic order to a height beyond the reach of the laity. It is no wonder that the Buddhist method of meditation disappeared among the latter, not to speak of the Buddha's own system.

Flimsy Method

The methods advocated for the practice of meditation by these two savants are virtually similar, decidedly an innovation, and not exactly adopted by the Master. The numerous instances and accounts of liberated monks given by Buddhaghoṣa himself in his commentaries prove his method to be apparently sweeping. For, he says in the section of the increasing and not-increasing (vaḍḍhan-avaḍḍhan-to) in the third chapter (kammaṭṭhāna) of the *Visuddhi-magga*, that the ten disks (kasiṇāni) only out of forty objects or subjects for meditation should be increased. The remaining thirty objects or subjects, according to him, are not to be expended for causes never mentioned by the Master. Meditation on the formation and decomposition of the body should not be developed, says he; because it is limited in space and devoid of merit.

But he cites the case of the Reverend Mallaka in the section on Body-Formation-Memory (kāya-gatā-sati). He (Mallaka) declared to Abhaya: "Mallaka-tthera is a recipient of thirty-two first-trances one on each of the thirty-two elements of the body." This realisation is wonderful and proves the weakness of Buddhaghoṣa's own dictum given above. There are other instances in the commentary on the *Sati-paṭṭhāna Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. They are Tissa of Sāvatthi, Pīta Matta, and other thirty Bhikkhus. Further on he writes: "Like these, the remaining ones should also be not developed... If one develops the sign (nimitta) of respiration (ānā-pāna), only the volume (rāsi) of air increases, and that limited in space. Hence owing to its being faulty and limited in space, it should not be increased. The Immeasurable (Brahma-Vihāra) are based on the living beings; if one develops their sign, only the heap of the living beings (sattā) gets increased, there is no purport for and by this. Hence it also should not be developed." We shall see later on that

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his sweeping remark and advice to refrain from these objects or subjects of meditation are directly against the Master's teaching.

Further on, in the case of formless illimitables (āruppā) also, he says: "The sky therein is only the removal of the disk (kasiṇa). That is to be remembered only through the passing away of the disk. After that, if one develops it, nothing (of consequence) happens; because the consciousness (viññāṇa) has a nature of its own, such a natural element cannot be developed. The passing away of consciousness is merely the absence of consciousness. The last of these four formless illimitables has also a nature of its own; therefore it should not be developed." Had it not come from Buddhaghoṣa, we would have totally ignored such an adverse opinion; but a commentator of Buddhaghoṣa's standing cannot just be summarily brushed aside.

Counterpart Image

At the end of this section, he says: "The rest are without signs and so not to be developed." He gives the reason for increasing and not-increasing the object or subject for meditation. He defines it by stipulating thus: "The sign of paṭibhāga can only be increased." This sign is in effect the counterpart of the mental image that arises after the mind has thoroughly learned or formed the exact image of the objects of meditation. These objects are nine disks (kasiṇa). viz., four elements (earth, water, fire, air) and four colours (blue, yellow, red, white) and light or brilliance. This device seems to have been later introduced and developed later. We shall see later on that the Master never practised such an artificial disk for organizing the trances, nor for developing supernatural powers, nor supernormal knowledge, nor for attaining supramundane insight. At any rate we cannot reconcile the rational approach of the Master's meditational system with such an artificial device of disks to which Buddhaghoṣa has wholly devoted the fourth chapter of his work, the *Visuddhi-magga*.

Similarly, Upatissa has also devoted the initial two long sections of the lengthy eighth chapter of his work the *Vimutti-magga* to this very artificial kasiṇa, or maṇḍala. The reason for adopting this method will also be dealt with later when we take up the first jhāna, its realisation and experience. Now to

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return to our discussion, Buddhaghoṣa says that there is no sign of paṭibhāga in remembrances such as 'remembrance of Buddha' etc. Therefore, he says: "That is not to be increased."

Now, before dealing with the Buddha's own system of meditation, we shall treat the salient features of the meditative system dealt with by Buddhaghoṣa so extensively in his famous work, the *Visuddhi-magga.* Along with this treatment, the relevant passages from the *Vimutti-magga* will also be given. For comparison, Vyāsa's commentary on Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtra* will be explored and cited. It is not done in this way, because of these methods being superior to or better than those of the Buddha's own. It is only for the reason that these means also seem to have been modelled and to have borne resemblance to or turned out to be virtually as near approaches to the Buddha's system. We have found that Buddhaghoṣa relies much more on disk (kasiṇa) practice than any other Kamma-ṭṭhānas. Evidently it is for the sign of paṭibhāga or counterpart mental image. He presumably thought that the cognition of form (rūpāvacara) trance could be only effected through this artificial sign appearing in the mind. On the other hand, the Buddha's method is direct and natural. The *Yoga-Sūtra,* its commentary and explanatory interpretations do not expressly differentiate form-recognition from the material plane (kāmāvacara), although various regions of Brahma-lokas are mentioned in them. Nevertheless, we shall detect such form in its absorption (samāpatti) and trance (samādhi) later on.

The Yoga System

Buddhaghoṣa bases his system on the foundation of monastic virtue (sīla). This virtue amounts in effect to the rigid observance of the rules or codes of conduct as given in monastic discipline. This is the barrier not easily surmountable in his system. Upatissa also does the same, presenting a similar barrier to any entrant into his system. Patañjali's yoga system has a short course for the best of candidates to yoga; it has a medium course for those of middle capacity; for all others it provides an eightfold means (sādhanā, or practice). This eightfold path is its main theme as well. The initial means or factor

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(yama) is a set of prohibitory injunctions numbering five. These prohibitions correspond to the four veramaṇis of the ten virtues and to the last one of the latter. The second factor is 'niyama' or a set of positive injunctions numbering five. These can roughly correspond to several precepts on virtue but not found in one place in Buddhism. The last one, that is, devotional att tude to God, is not found in Buddhistic practice, in as much as the idea of one supreme God is not entertained in the *Tipiṭaka*. In a certain sense the conception of the Bodhi, pure or personified, and that of Primordial (Ādi) Buddha virtually take the place of the God of philosophy, theology, and common-sense in Buddhism.

Preliminary Hurdles

After the hurdle in the shape of the virtue to be strictly and invariably observed by an amateur, Buddhaghoṣa treats of the rules of austerity called 'dhutaṅga.' Although these practices are not difficult for an ascetic and also generally followed by the latter, the stipulation made by Buddhaghoṣa is another hurdle in the way of the preliminaries to meditation. Upatissa deals with this feature in the third chapter on the Austerities of *Vimutti-magga*. But his stipulation is not as hard as that of Buddhaghoṣa. We should have expected such a feature in yoga under 'tapas,' the third item of the observational 'niyama,' but it is short as follows: "Tapas is to endure the double extreme. The double extreme (dvandva) means the pairs of hunger and thirst, cold and heat, standing posture and sitting posture, total silence and wordless silence; these are to be done according to vows (vrata) such as kriccha, cāndrāyaṇa, sāntapana, etc."—Vyāsa's commentary. But Buddhaghosa has fully dealt with this austerity in thirteen sections. So does Upatissa in his work.

Resorts for Meditation

There is some difference in the aim and purpose of the observance of this austerity in Buddhist and yogic systems. Yoga wants to purify the body and thereby the mind by enduring extremes and undergoing penances. But the aim and

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purpose of both the Buddhist savants are not only to purify the body and the mind through the observance of these austerities but to utilize them for the attainment of meditation and insight. In fact, about half of them might be useful even now in a less severe form. They are the following: "The austerity of going to and practising meditation in a wilderness away from habitation (arañña), under a tree, in the open air (abbhokāsika), in the cremation-ground, in an unprearranged place, and always in the sitting posture. Such places are indeed popular among oriental meditationists, the last posture being generally adopted by them.

It is to be recalled here that the Bodhisatto had used, before his enlightenment, many more devices, penances, and austerities. Ultimately he found them all valueless. He put them aside and resorted to the organisation of the trance he had before under the shade of a rose-apple tree in Kapilavastu. These austerities are praiseworthy in an ascetic, a recluse, a full-time meditationist only. This tendency may lead one to asceticism as an ideal in itself. Asceticism cannot by itself produce meditation, or trance, or insight. It may, or may not, even help meditation. We know the Bodhisatto found ultimately that it does not help meditation, nor trance, nor cultivation and development of supernatural power or knowledge, nor intuitional insight into liberation and Nibbāna. We have to believe him.

Mutual Influence

Since each and every realisation of the kamma-ṭṭhānas and inner knowledge and insight depends upon the first trance of the form-plane, Buddhaghoṣa and also Upatissa laboriously explain the practice of meditating on the disk of earth-element (paṭhavi kasiṇa). The rest of the kasiṇas are referred to the earth-kasiṇa for all the preliminaries and procedures. Hence to understand the meditational fundamentals of these two savants, the right comprehension of the 'paṭhavi kasiṇa' is most important. We do not find such full and fine details in the *Yogasūtra* and its commentaries as we do in these two works. Mixed with religion and philosophy, the yoga system of Patañjali and Vyāsa has obscured the lucid exposition of meditation,

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trance, and insight as much as the two works have done. In clear contrast the Buddha's system of meditation appears to be simple, unhampered by any bias or doctrine, and at the same time unfathomably deep in its metaphysical significance. In consonance with the sūtra (aphorism) system of treatment, the Yoga of Patañjali and Vyāsa is outwardly a unified whole, but in reality it appears to be a collection of meditative systems including that of later Buddhism extant and in vogue at the time of its composition. Similarly, the expository materials of Buddhaghoṣa disclose in places the influence or knowledge of the yoga system. In the same way, the Vyāsa Commentary seems to have largely borrowed terms, phrases, and ideas from the later Buddhistic system.

NOTES

[1]In Buddhism, as in other oriental systems of religion and philosophy, it is presumed that "kamma" or action, if effective, produces its "vipāka" or result or resultant. Such a resultant may bring about its effect either during the present life or in the next birth, or at any time, when it gets an opportunity to make itself manifest, according to the strength and gravity of the kamma. the vipāka of kamma, however, is passive and cannot produce another vipāka. The action of a liberated person is regarded as merely of an inoperative or functional character. This bears therefore no resultant whatsoever.

[2]The Buddhist original texts are either found in Pāli or Mixed Sanskrit. Some may be said to have been found in Prākrita also. Mixed Sanskrit does not conform with the regular language and grammar of Sanskrit. The language of such a text is mixed with Prākrita (old dialect) words and phrases. There are Buddhist texts in Sanskrit, but these are thought to be of later dates than those of Pāli, Prākrita, and Mixed Sanskrit. For example, the Mahāvastu or Mahāvastu-avadāna is entirely written in Mixed Sanskrit, and so are many of the longer metrical passages of the *Lalita-vistara*. This is sometimes called Gāthā Sanskrit and also Hybrid Sanskrit.

[3]The 'upetas' in the text seems to be equivalent, to, apetas', deprived.

[4]When the grain was growing the cowherd had to watch the cows very carefully lest they ate the grain. When, however, the grain had been harvested, he had only to watch the cows casually.

[5]*The Pali English Dictionary* of the Pali Text Society (1966)—The Pali Text Society's *Pali-English Dictionary*, edited by T. W. Rhys

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Davids, F.B.A., D.Sc., Ph. D., LL. D., D. Litt. and William Stede, Ph. D. published for the Pali Text Society by Luzac & Company, Ltd. 46 Great Russell Street, London, W.C. 1, 1966. (First published 1921-1925, Reprinted 1949, 1952, 1959, 1966).

[6]Forty in the *Visuddhi-magga*.

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III

Meditation on Earth Kasiṇa

Different System

MEDITATION ON earth or earth-kasiṇa does not mean worship of the earth, or its realisation, or its analysis. It is merely used as a support to produce meditation free from any conception of the earth, or its various transformations, or any doctrine about the earth. In the Canon, meditation on the earth as a flat expanse is described in many relevant suttas. Hence meditation on a natural flat earth makes a separate system. But this system is not found fully expounded anywhere in the Canon or Commentary.

Another system is to fix one's attention on a ploughed field, or on a threshing-ground. But Buddhaghoṣa says: "One who has a former meditative merit can get a sign arising upon a natural earth,[1] or a ploughed field, or a threshing-ground, like the case of Mallaka-tthera. This Thera got the sign arising on looking at a ploughed field, but as big as the spot only." We are not to be discouraged by the frequent mention of former merits for any quick and sudden result. For it is a way of ascribing a cause to such a result. Obviously full details of such a natural system are not to be found in the commentaries.

A common system found in the two works on Buddhist meditation is the fixing of attention on a small limited spot of made-up earth. Although the object of meditation is small and

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limited initially, the counterpart sign arising or arisen out of the object is intended to be fully expanded in the later stages. It is to all appearances artificial, but earnestly relied upon by the two Buddhist writers in their works. So far as Buddhaghoṣa is concerned, he must have taken this artificial system from the old tradition. It is not found explicitly in the suttas; therefore we have to conclude that the practice came into vogue only in the late Canonical period.

In the First Book of the *Abhidhamma* the term 'Paṭhavi kasiṇa' is found joined to each of the four stages of trance on the Form Plane. But it is not known whether this kasiṇa was the artificial one described by Buddhaghoṣa, or a natural piece of ground. In the Fifth Book or the Book of Controversy, we find, in the third kathā of the fifth section (vagga) entitled Viparīta Kathā, a discussion under ten allied topics on paṭhavi kasiṇa. Therein also it is not clear whether an artificial device of made-up earth is meant or a natural one. The commentary on this kathā says that the discussion started on the adverse view of the Andhaka sect of Buddhism. The adherents of that sect held that the meditation on paṭhavi-kasiṇa is based on wrong knowledge. Refuting the view with the counter questions characteristic of the Kathā-vatthu method, the conservative school proves that this is not so.

Buddhaghosa's Method

The kasiṇa is of two kinds. One of the two is made portable, the second is fixed, or the spot on the ground itself. The portable one is made of a piece of cloth or leather or straw-mat tied to four sticks at the corners. The fixed one is prepared on the ground in the shape of the pericarp of a lotus, by beating down roots and stumps in the ground and encircling the spot with creepers. If the ground be hollow, it should be filled up with earth. On the surface of the spot a circle is to be made of dawn-coloured earth. The circle should be a span and four fingers wide, that is, a foot in diameter. The selection of dawn-coloured earth is made, according to Buddhaghosa, in order to free the spot from the four paṭhavi-kasiṇa defects. These defects are blue, yellow, red, and white in mixture. Therefore the kasiṇa should be made with dawn-coloured clay like

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that of the bank of the Rovana-Gaṅgā in the Sīhaladīpa (Ceylon).

Evidently, Buddhaghoṣa is basing his method on some old tradition, because he says: "It is said—one who is meditating on paṭhavi kasiṇa grasps the sign on earth, prepared or unprepared, limited or unlimited, with ends or without ends, with encircling line or without such line, with boundary, or without boundary, the size of a winnowing flat basket or that of a saucer (suppa-matta vā sarāva-matte vā)." The surface of the spot should be smoothed with a stone trowel, not with a wooden one. It is to be made as even as the surface of a drum.

Upatissa's Method

The earth kasiṇa is given in the first section of the eighth chapter of the *Vimutti-magga*. The treatment is arranged in the form of questions and answers. The following is the gist of the long catechism: "There are two kinds of earth, natural and prepared. Solidity is the property of natural earth. What is made of dug-out earth is called prepared earth. Earth is of four colours, namely, white, black (blue), red, and dawn-coloured. Nothing should be added to natural earth. One is to exclude white, black (blue?), and red. These colours in earth kasiṇa are not conducive to the after-image. Moreover, these are of the colour kasiṇa. If it is of dawn colour, one should take that sign."[2]

He does not mention a portable kasiṇa, as Buddhaghosa does. "The prepared earth should be a level ground free from thickets, roots and tufts of trees and grass. The maṇḍala for meditation should be made on this ground. It is a circle made according to rule. It is to be flat, full, and without markings. It should be edged with another colour. The circle may be of the size of a round rice-sifter, a metal gong. It may be circular, rectangular, triangular, or square. According to the principal teacher's instructions, a circle is the best."

It is obvious that Upatissa is also following the old tradition in his work. Buddhaghosa is definite about the shape of the kasiṇa, while Upatissa gives shapes other than the circular one. Although he does not clearly say that it is portable, he mentions: "The maṇḍala may be made on cloth, on a board, or on

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a wall. But it is best on the ground. This is the teaching of predecessor teachers." Mention of a triangular shape is not to be misunderstood as a germ of later tantricism; for its purpose here is totally different from that of the latter.

Both the savants are right in discarding from their kasiṇa colours other than that of the earth. For a bright and deep colour in the kasiṇa will draw attention to it away from the earth. A dull or gray or earth colour in the kasiṇa would equally suit it as a dawn colour; for the main purpose is to arouse the concept of an earth surface. It is noticeable that the yoga system has nothing answering to such a kasiṇa. Its absence in the yoga may indicate that the practice was out of vogue at the time of the composition of the yoga. The latter might also have ignored it as of little consequence. Nāgasena also does not mention it in his work, the *Questions of Milinda.*

Gazing at Kasina

Buddhaghoṣa very minutely deals with the process of gazing at a fixed earth kasiṇa. The portable one is rather ignored by him. He writes: "One should be seated at a distance of two cubits and a half (three feet nine inches) from the kasiṇa maṇḍala (the disc circle). For at a distance of more than that the kasiṇa does not manifest itself; at a nearer distance the defects of kasiṇa become visible." One should not be seated higher nor lower than the kasiṇa.

Manner of Gazing

"One should be eager and opening the eyes evenly should be grasping the sign of the kasiṇa, while meditating on it." One is not to open the eyes too much; for this will make the eyes ache and tired; thereby the maṇḍala becomes too conspicuous, whereby the sign does not arise. If one opens the eyes too little the maṇḍala becomes unclear, the mind becomes drowsy, and thereby also the sign does not arise. Therefore, like one who sees the sign or reflection of one's face on the surface of a looking-glass, one should open the eyes evenly and be grasping the sign of the kasiṇa, while meditating on it."

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No Colour and No Property

This minute guidance will clearly show that the chief intention is to arouse the sign of the kasiṇa in one's mind. The sign (nimitta) is here tantamount to the reflection of the kasiṇa on one's mind. Now we shall quote the most important instruction or guidance he hints at. This is as follows: "Neither the colour of the kasiṇa should be considered, nor the property of the kasiṇa attended to. But still, without releasing the colour, it should be only a support. And applying the mind to the concept only, owing to the kasiṇa being prominently earth, one should thus meditate." The substance of this passage is simply this: The colour and property of earth kasiṇa should be made a mere support for gazing; it is not to be regarded as an object itself, it is to be made a concept only.

A Version

Since the passage is a pivot on which the understanding of a concept of form (rūpāvacara) depends, we shall extend it a little more. The late Dharmānanda Kosāmbi explains the portion in his work in Pāli entitled *Visuddhi-magga-dipikā* or an exposition of the meaning of Visuddhi-magga thus: "The colour of the kasiṇa should not be particularly observed. The rough and hard property of the earth matter should not be attended to. The mind should not feed on it by means of the colour. But one is to join the colour with its support that is the earth. There is prominently earth in the earth kasiṇa, therefore it is said so in the passage. . . . The sign of kasina is only a concept." This version is practically the same as the one given above. The Pāli word' pannatti' is fully explained in the Pāli compendium of philosophical tenets, named *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*, towards the end of its eighth chapter, as follows:

Pannatti or Concept

There are five principal elements recognized in Buddhism, such as, matter (rūpa), feeling (vedanā), perception (sannā), immaterial formations (saṅkhāra), and consciousness (vinnāna). Nibbāna is a separate category by itself. Excepting these, all others come under the pannatti. This pannatti is divided into two kinds, concept and term. Among the different kinds of

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concepts, the sign of kasiṇa, arising from the material element or due to particular meditative devices, is non-existing in reality. In practical parlance, however, it is conceived and spoken of. It becomes a support for the arising of the mind in the shape of a shadow of an object or phenomenon. It is thus imagined by making it a factor for different needs. Commenting on this in his commentary, Dharmānanda Kosāmbi says: "The sign of the element herein means the sign of the physical elements, such as, kasiṇas of earth, water, fire, and air. The shadow of an object means the shape of the counter part of a real object (paramattha). It is, however, a concept which belongs to the non-existing category."

A Note on Mahatika

There are several sub-commentaries on the *Visuddhi-magga*. The Mahāṭikā or Paramattha-mañjūsā is one of them. The author of this work is the versatile Dhamma-pāla of Badaratittha Vihāra. It is said in the introductory verse that this work follows the doctrine of the Mahāvihāra Monastery. Our savant Buddhaghoṣa also follows the same doctrine in his famous work, *Visuddhi-magga*. Reverend Nāṇamoli[3] of Sri-Lanka has given a long quotation from this Mahāṭikā as a foot-note at page 129 of his English translation of the *Visuddhi-magga* entitled 'The Path of Purification' (1956). His translation of the relevant passage of the text from the *Visuddhi-magga* has been further explained with the relative exposition from the said sub-commentary.

Nothing has however been said more helpful in these translations than what the Pāli text says and we have shown above. The main thing to mark here in this context is the advice we can offer that the kasiṇa, while looking at it, should not be taken in our conception as a hard matter, because the concept of form is above the material plane; and also because our visual perception is not the hard matter or earth but merely the inner sensual percept as visible object (Sanidassana) lying outside. The relevant passage of the text and the sub-commentary in Pāli would be the following piece, when rendered jointly in English:

"Neither the earthly colour of the artificial or unprepared

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spot of the kasiṇa appliance or ground should be thought over, nor are the earthly properties of the material appliance or ground to be conceived in the mind. Since the concept of earth is co-extensive with the earthly colour, the latter is to be taken simply as an aid to our memory that we are meditating before it."

Gazing in Vimutti-magga

The following is the gist of the method of gazing at an earth kasiṇa given by Upatissa in the *Vimutti-magga*: "And taking the mat (to sit upon) of meditation to a place neither too far from nor too near the maṇḍala (kasiṇa), i.e., about the length of a plough-pole or a fathom (six feet) (from the maṇḍala), one sits down with legs crossed under one, faces the maṇḍala, holds the body erect and arouses mindfulness with closed eyes. After some time, one is able to exclude all disturbances of body and mind, collect one's thoughts and unify one's mind. Then opening the eyes neither too wide nor too narrow, one should fix one's gaze on the maṇḍala." As the distance differs from that of Buddhaghoṣa, the length of a plough-pole seems to have been only imagined to be equal to a fathom. The sitting posture is the same for meditation. The need for calmness of body and mind is also the same before any meditation.

"The yogin should meditate on the form of the maṇḍala and take the sign through three ways: even gazing, skilfulness, and neutralizing disturbance. He should not open his eyes too wide, they will grow weary, and the after-image will not arise. If he faces the maṇḍala closing the eyes fast, he will not see the sign because of darkness, and he will arouse negligence. Therefore he should refrain from opening his eyes too wide and closing them too fast. As a man looking at his own face in a mirror sees his face because of the mirror, so the yogin dwelling on the maṇḍala sees the sign of concentration which arises, because of the maṇḍala. Thus one takes the sign through even gazing." The simile of the face and a mirror does not seem to be as appropriate as that of Buddhaghoṣa in the context. The sign of concentration here is to be understood as the sign of the maṇḍala rising through concentration on it.

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Two Other Ways

"The next way is skilfulness. It is four. The first is to put away any internal lack; the second is to view the maṇḍala squarely, the third is to supply the deficiency should a partial sign or half the maṇḍala appear; the fourth is to wait, should any distraction and negligence intervene; when his mind acquires fixity, he should gaze on the maṇḍala."

"The third or last way is the neutralizing of disturbance. It is also four. The first (disturbance) is endeavour that is too quick; the second is endeavour that is too slow; the third is elation; the fourth is depression."

On the former way the book does not give any detail; but the detail on the latter way is very interesting. "It is hurried practice. The yogin is impatient. He sits (to meditate) in the morning. By evening he ceases (to endeavour), because of weariness of body. This is called hurried doing (under the too-quick category). Too-slow (category)—It is to stray away from the way of meditation. Often he lies down." Although much more such details on endeavour and its absence are abundant in the suttas, these are useful to compare the two savants.

"When a yogin endeavours too vigorously, his body becomes weary and his mind flags. Or, the mind wanders and loses itself in frivolous thoughts. When he endeavours too slowly, his body and mind become dull and lazy and sleep overtakes him." On elation, he says that it stems through willingly by not taking delight previously in frivolous thoughts. He has quite an original idea about how one becomes discontented with the subject of meditation. The discontentment arises, according to him, when one loses one's mind in frivolous thoughts.

Similarly, the dislike for the subject of meditation stems from uneasiness owing to agitation. From this dislike, depression sets in through resentment at any activity. "And again, his mind becomes weary of initial and sustained application of thought, and becomes depressed." Buddhaghoṣa has dealt with similar things only after taking up the topic of preliminaries of samādhi.

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Trataka

In Haṭha Yoga, there is a well-known practice called Trāṭaka. It is not to be confused with the kasiṇa, in as much as the method and purpose of the two widely differ. The Trāṭaka practice is ancillary to awakening a psychic latent power called Kuṇḍalinī. The method of Trāṭaka is to gaze intently at a bright point or object; the eyes are kept open for as long as six-hours continuously. A few practicers are known to have gazed at the bright sun from sunrise to sunset. Some practise by gazing at a black bright-coloured spot kept at a convenient distance. There are varieties of trāṭakas, external, on the spot between the eyebrows, and internal on certain psychic centres. Generally here in also no incantations are repeated, and also no imagination is brought in.

After-Image

Buddhaghoṣa goes on describing the kasiṇa practice thus: "The earth has many synonyms; whichever name is agreeable to the amateur should be repeated while meditating." This injunction is decidedly open to scrutiny. The Buddha has never recited nor advised anyone to recite, while meditating, such names. He further says: "One should contemplate by opening the eyes at times and shutting them at times. Until the after-image of the earth kasiṇa arises, the amateur should meditate on the kasiṇa in this very way a hundred times, a thousand times, even more times than those." This sort of mentality may discourage amateurs. It is intentional, for Buddhaghosa is less severe on other phases of trance. He has given some short and easy courses for meditation and insight at places.

Mahatika Paramattha-manjusa

Our savant, Buddhaghoṣa, wrote or compiled the work entitled the *Visuddhi-magga* or the Way to Purification. This purification is obtained, according to this work, through the practice of right moral conduct (Śīla), right meditation (Samādhi), and right discernment (Prajñā). Evidently he has utilized the resources of the commentaries, particularly Sri Lankan Mahā-aṭṭha-kathā, on the Buddhist texts. It is natural that the need of sub-commentaries, annotations, and explanatory manuals on this important work was felt and fulfilled. One of

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such enterprises was the Mahāṭikā or the great annotation, or the Paramattha Mañjūṣā, that is, the Basket of the excellent things.

The author of this sub-commentary or annotation is, as already noted above, Dhamma-pāla-acariya. This work is very helpful in understanding the intention, import, and purport of Buddhaghoṣa and his *Visuddni-magga*. Another savant of recent times, named Dharmānanda Kosāmbi, however, thinks that the *Visuddhi-magga* itself being a commentary is fully adequate to explain its own technical items. In the Preface to his work, *Visuddhi-magga-dīpika* or the expositor of *Visuddhi-magga* (1943), Kosāmbi writes:—"The *Visuddhi-magga* is itself a commentary. Buddhaghoṣācāriya wrote it as a main guide to his four commentaries (on the four principal Nikāyas of the Sutta Piṭaka). So there is no need of an elaborate commentary on it such as the Paramatthamañjūsā of Dhammapālācariya, which has not made the study of the *Visuddhi-magga* itself easier...I have avoided its method..... ...I have pointed out its defects."

The details sometimes hamper the smooth understanding of a serious work. Dharmānanda Kosāmbi must have certainly found the details of the said sub-commentary sometimes and at places irksome. But I have found these details often very helpful of course in the original. The said translation of the *Visuddhi-magga* and the notes from the sub-commentary in English, because of rather rigidly literal translation, are sometimes found to be more difficult to be comprehended than the Pāli text itself. So far as the practical side of the yogic devices and instructions is concerned, a strict literal translation, such as the said works in English translation, might little benefit the real and would-be novices or practisers of yogic devices.

Hence I have tried my best to present the original matters in their essence as far as practicable, rather than any adherence to their strict literal form. As a matter of fact, the Master has definitely encouraged us to use our own dialects to complete the study of the Buddha-vacana or the word of the Buddha: "I permit, Monks! to complete the Buddha-vacana by means of own dialect" (*Abhidhamma Culla-vagga* 5.16). The commentary 'Samanta-pāsādikā' (5. para 43), however, interprets

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the phrase 'own dialect' (Sakāya niruttiyā) as the Māgadhi dialect used by the Master. This would be virtually the Canonical language, Pāli, Prākrit, or Mixed Sanskrit.

So we have been trying to present this Research work in such a way as to make it something like an original work. It is to be kept in mind that this Research work tries to present a comprehensive and practical guide to the Buddha's system of meditation rather than that of theoretical or philosophical one.

Abhoga

This word is important in this context. Hence we are dealing with it at some length. Under the sub-section "No Colour and No Property" above, we said, among other things, 'But still, without releasing the colour, it should be only a support.' And under 'A Version', it was given from Kosāmbi, 'The mind should not feed on it by means of the colour.' Under "A note *Mahā-ṭīkā*", 'but rather, while not ignoring the colour, attention should be given...'was a translation of Nāṇamoli. Under the same heading, a note from the *Mahātīkā* translated by him was as follows: "The saying shows that here the concern is not with the colour which is the channel, but rather that this colour should be treated as an accessory of the physical support." Evidently the word 'ābhoga' was translated as 'concern', by Nāṇamoli. Similarly, he has translated this word as 'concern' in the 48th section of the eleventh chapter (387) of the *Visuddhimagga*. The relevant text is: "Mutually devoid of 'ābhoga' and review are these things", but his translation reads: 'These things are devoid of mutual concern and reviewing'. Hence we have to make the term clearer in the next section.

Review

The above quotation would be rather unclear, without the full context. Therefore I have to refer, with apology, to the relevant piece only, although it has already been given above. The reason will be clear in the course of our treatment of this important technical term used in the Canon, commentary, subcommentary, and also the *Yoga-Sūtra* commentary and literature. Although the word seems to have been so current in the

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then-psychology, no satisfactory meaning or explanation is found anywhere. Even the Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary gives only an indeterminate short paragraph on "Ābhoga" (at p. 103). Dhammānanda Kosāmbi has evidently taken this word from the *Mahā-ṭikā* and given the same in his *Dīpikā* mentioned above as it is and without any explanation. We are also acquainted with the meaning of this word as 'concern' translated by Nāṇamoli. It is strange that he should have thought the word meant 'concern'. *The Pāli Dictionary* has given its meaning as——'ideation, idea, thought, and semantically āhāra equivalent to ābhoga or food'. Dr. G. V. Devasthali's *Sanskrit Dictionary* gives its meaning as 'satiety' among others. Bālacandra Sharma's *Nepāli-Shabda-Kosha* or Nepāli Dictionary has the meaning 'enjoyment'.

This psychological word, ābhoga, indicates an inner experience of something felt, organized, or meditated upon. The reason is obvious; a mental moment cannot entertain two separate concepts; one is of the subject of the appanā and the other is the relish of the experience. Hence the orthodox view would make any ābhoga of the trance or absorption or insight either before or after the actual mental event. This should not confuse us; for the relish of anything material or immaterial would necessarily be guarded against in the Master's system. Ābhoga would naturally arise, but it is not to be attended to. The commentary takes it to be a relish of inner experience, and hence its exclusion from the trance.

Textual Meaning

In the 44th section of the very first sutta of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the *Brahma-jāla-sutta* or Discourse on all the Fallacious Doctrines, the Buddha, contradicting the claim of the doctrine that one's soul is directly and currently liberated in the fourth stage of meditation, says: "To the previous one another proponent says,—whatever pleasant feeling is there (in the third stage of meditation) is the 'ābhogo' of the mind; thereby it is deemed to be gross....." The proponent then upholds his claim stating the fourth stage, in which the pleasant feeling is also suppressed.

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The Buddha contradicts this claim, because of one's sticking to the subtle concept of one's own soul immortal and immutable and eternal. We shall see later on that this very stage of meditation in the Buddha's system is naturally and automatically free from such an additional concept. The meaning of the word 'ābhogo' can be clearly understood here in the context.

In the seventh kathā of the seventh chapter (vagga) of the 5th Book or the Book of Controversy in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, we find seven mental phenomena arising on objects of support (sārammaṇā). These are, in a sort of ascending series, apprehending (āvaṭṭanā), 'ābhoga', concentrating (samannāhāra), pondering (manasi-kāra), willing (cetanā), desiring (patthanā), resolving (paṇidhi). The last three terms are the synonyms of willing (cetanā), according to the commentary on the 9th kathā of the 8th chapter of the above book. Similarly, the same series with similar meaning is found in the 8th kathā of the 7th chapter; in the 9th kathā of the 8th chapter; in the 3rd kathā of the 14th chapter; and in the 8th kathā of the 16th chapter of the same book of controversy.

The Commentary on the above five kathās treats of the main subjects of controversy. It also gives the name of the sects holding the doctrine under discussion, such as Andhaka, Mahisāsaka, Sammitiya, Uttara-pathaka, etc. Only in the first and the third of these kathās does the commentator touch on the series as a whole; but it does not explain the meaning of each of these words separately. It seems that the earlier psychological terms were superseded by those of later ones set up in a rather new system. It can be seen in the attempt at measuring the duration of mental moment and material life-span in terms of the former in the Commentary on the First Book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. This treatment may be read in the 19th and 20th paragraphs of the Description of the Last Chapter or Aṭṭha-kathākaṇḍa of the Commentary. The duration of a mental moment is much longer therein as compared to that of Nāgasena's famous simile of a hundred cartloads of rice and the mind changing during a finger-snapping. This simile is given in the 20th section of the 4th part of the *Questions of Milinda*. It is also quoted, with a little different wording, in the

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commentary on the 8th sutta of the 5th Vagga in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. The duration of the life-span of the matter in terms of mental moments seems to be of a later origin and presumably dogmatic.

Milinda's Meaning

The word 'ābhogo' is used as an answer to Nāgasena by Milinda. King Milinda, voicing the views of the opponents of Buddhism, places them before Nāgasena and demands solution to the dilemma from him. "If the Buddha enjoys the worship (of others), he is not freed from all existences (parinibbuta)...If he is freed from all existences (parinibbuta), his worship does not arise, for the freed one enjoys nothing....." Nāgasena solves this dilemma by means of eight long similes described in the 12th to 19th sections of the 4th part of the *Milinda-Pañha* or *Questions of Milinda*. In the 13th and 14th sections we find the word 'ābhoga'. In answer to Nāgasena, the King admits that there is no 'ābhoga' or pondering (manasi-kāra) of the already ceased storm over returning; for the storm is inanimate. In the next similar answer also, the King admits that there is no 'ābhoga' or pondering of the already vanished drum-sound for being produced again; for once produced, the drum-sound is vanished and annihilated. The Pāli phrase 'ābhago vā manasi-kāro vā' is apparently used here to express the whole idea of the situation. The purpose of dwelling on this word is to show that a simple idea, such as 'cetaso ābhogo' expressed by the Buddha in the *Digha Nikāya* mentioned above, is much more useful and significant than a long exegetical chapter on the same idea. The meditation system of the Buddha is quite simple, but has been made most intricate by exegetical profusion. It will be our endeavour to project those simple ideas in this research. As an example, we shall go a little further on with this word 'ābhoga'.

Commentatorial Meaning

Buddhaghoṣa has used the phrase 'ābhoga-paccavekkhana' or in other words, 'ābhoga' and analytic consideration (pacca-vekkhana) thirty-two times, in the eleventh chapter of his work *Visuddhi-maggo*, once in connection with each item of the

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thirty-two ingredients of the body. To give an example of an item, say, the hair, the hair grows on the scalp of the head. These phenomena (dhammā) are devoid of mutual 'ābhoga' and 'pacca-vekkhana'. He has used the word 'ābhoga-abhāva' or the absence of 'ābhoga', towards the end of 9th chapter of the same work. Herein he is dealing with meditation on the four Immeasurables, such as Friendliness (mettā), Compassion (karuṇa), Joyfulness (muditā), and lastly. Disinterestedness (upekkhā). For the production of these expansive meditations, the basic foundation of the First Jhāna is necessary. And Buddhaghoṣa advises the same earth kasiṇa as a preliminary in this case also. When treating of the last immeasurable one, he says: "Due to the absence of 'ābhoga' towards the living beings as,—Let they be happy, or released from sufferings, or not fallen from gained happiness'—the practicer of this upekkhā-vihāra has...(absence for a support of) the mind". In other words, the practicer, after the three previous frames of the mind expressed in the wishes of the three sentences above, passes over these interests and attains the last stage of Disinterestedness. The word 'ābhoga' herein is tantamount to the idea of the above-mentioned three sentiments.

In the commentary on the First Book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, Buddhaghoṣa uses the word 'Ābhoga' in five places. In the third part, the 68th paragraph contains: "Through various meritorious reliance, proper (yoniso) 'ābhogo' proceeds.. ." In the same part and under the *Abhibhāyatana-kathā*, or mastery over the practice of meditation, he writes: "The practicer, overpowering the external forms, quickly attains, saying—'I know, I see—', the trance." Herein 'By I know, I see,' the previous 'Ābhoga' is told, so says he. Further on he says: "But it is said in the *Āgama-aṭṭha-kathā*—by this its 'abhogo' is told." But that is of one who has come down from the trance, and not during the trance. Evidently Buddhaghoṣa wants as does the commentary, to make the word mean a thought occurring before or after the trance. We are, however, acquainted with the textual meaning of 'cetaso ābhogo' or the ābhogo of the mind in the state of the third trance, as quoted above from the *Dīgha Nikāya*; but the Commentary says that it is after the trance.

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In the Formless Merit kathā of the above Commentary, under the last trance of this category, and also in his work, Buddhaghoṣa says: "In this by means of calmness one ponders (manasi-karoti): 'On, calm and tranquil is this absorption (samāpatti), wherein it stands by making the support of even non-existence...' The practicer however has no 'ābhogo', concentrating (samannāhāro), pondering (manasi-kāro), such as—I will advert to this; I will enter upon this; I will direct the thoughts to this; I will arise from this; I will consider over this." Hereafter he gives a simile of a great king and a skilled artist. The king admires the skill, but does not wish to learn it by renouncing his kingdom. Similarly, there do not arise the ābhogo, samannāhāro, etc., of the entrant in this last absorption of the four Illimitables (āruppā). In spite of his endeavour to suppress the import, the meaning is, in this context also, quite clear.

Yoga-Bhasya Meaning

The evidence of this word being current in connection with the ancient meditative psychology is provided by the *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya* of the *Yogasūtra*. Commenting on the 17th Sūtra, Vyāsa says: "Vitarka is the gross (sthūla) 'ābhoga' in the supporting object (ālambana) of the mind (citta). Vicāra is the subtle (sūkṣma) ābhoga..." On the word, ābhoga, the commentator Vācaspati Miśra writes: "An insight directly realising one's own nature (svarūpa-sākṣātkāravati prajñā) is ābhoga. That is, owing to a gross subject (viṣaya), gross (sthūla). Similarly, in the supporting object of the mind, the subtle ābhoga is vicāra...In the (comparatively) gross sense organs, the ābhoga of the mind is joy (āhlāda)."

Another commentator Vijnañā Bhikṣu, explaining this at greater length, says in substance: "Therein in the supporting object cosmic, bodily, etc., firstly, what is, owing to the grossness of the mind, the gross ābhoga, that is, fully-completeness, is the wholly particular realisation; this is 'Savitarka' (the first stage of samādhi)." In a similar way he goes on to explain the word vicāra as—what is the subtle ābhoga of the mind is the wholly particular realisation; this is 'sa-vicāra' (the second factor of the first samādhi). And when the particular happiness

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called joy (Āhlāda) Ābhoga is realised, then it is termed Ānanda-anugata (blissful) yoga.

It seems that the word, ābhoga, had gone out of use from the time of Bhojarāja, who has interpreted this word as Bhāvanā and Samāpatti instead. Because he has not quoted it in his sub-commentary, so other sub-commentators also, such as Bhāvaganesha, Nāgoji-Bhaṭṭa, Rāmānanda, Ananta-Deva, and Sadā-Shivendra, etc., have rather by passed it, and interpreted it as Sākṣātkāra or realisation. There is an exception. As the explanation of the old Commentary of Vyāsa, we find the word and its import in the two principal sub-commentaries of Miśra and Bhikṣu; it gives a substance of both the old and the new interpretation of the word, Ābhoga. This study shows the difficulty of arriving at a correct or rather purposeful meaning of a meditative term. It is no wonder that our mind is often disinclined to meditation.

Conclusion

The quotation from the *Dīgha Nikāya* 'Cetaso Ābhogo' and that of the *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya* 'Cittasya...Ābhoga' are wonderfully close and similar. The lengthy treatment of this word will save us several dogmatic discussions in the course of our research on the Buddha's system of meditation and the organization of different trances, contemplative thinking, absorptions, immeasurables, illimitables and the cessation of consciousness and feeling. Dogmatism in meditation is a great impediment. All the exegetical explanations of meditation and its principal terms are found to be more or less beset with interminable dogmas, tenets, and traditions. Hence this research mainly aims at discovering and propounding the Buddha's own experience and practice regarding his system of meditation. Buddhism is a vast collection of codes, tenets, miracles and traditions. It is very difficult to select, out of such a huge literature, what we have set our heart to find out.

The best course is. in my opinion, to follow the singularly unique method of the originator of Buddhism himself. Although almost all the schools of Buddhism trace it to some remote past, we shall not be far from the practical truth to hold that it originated from the mystical experience of the Shākya Prince

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'Sarvārtha-siddha', shortened to 'Siddhārtha' or 'Siddhattha'. He is the same 'Shākya-muni' mentioned in the Asokan Pillar Inscription discovered at Lumbini in the Mid-Western Terai of Nepal. He has not written any autobiography of himself, but he has told enough of it during his life-time. He might have passed a good many years of his household life in the pursuit of knowledge, philosophical or mythological, traditional or intuitional, meditational or mystical. According to his own oft-repeated reminiscence, it is clear that his Bodhi or totality of knowledge was not the work of probably a single day or week at Gayā. It must have originated at Kapilavastu; it went on slowly developing in the Shākyan territory; its development reached a culminating stage in his home—a critical stage that required the Great Renunciation.

The Method of the Buddha

We have dealt with a preliminary device of gazing at a circular earth kasiṇa. The remaining portion of this method will be shown later on, inasmuch as it is a sort of psychological process of visualizing the earth-kasiṇa so that its clear image is produced in the mind. The mental image is called the learned or visualized (uggaha) image (nimitta) or sign. This after-image is a sort of clear remembrance of the earth-kasiṇa. Since it is free from the material earth, the mental after-image becomes clearer and clearer till a counterpart image is said to appear as a mental phenomenon. This is termed 'paṭi-bhāga nimitta'. According to Buddhaghoṣa, it can be expanded as much as we like and becomes the base for higher absorptions and also for supernatural powers. The rest of the kasiṇas are, one by one, also similarly gazed at; its image is learned and visualized; the after-image is produced; the counterpart image is developed; and then it is used for different higher purposes.

Such an artificial method is nowhere reported to have been resorted to by the Shākya Prince. He was, to all appearances, a realist; his imagination ever sought a real basis; he apparently eschewed all doctrinal theories; his motive is not seen to be a mere satisfaction of casual curiosities. He was probably more of an introvert than an extrovert in his childhood. Although we know, from his earlier reminiscences, that he had several

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weaknesses of the mind, he knew and tried to classify them into good and bad categories. He was also sometimes haunted with folk-lore fears and tried to overcome them as soon as they arose, as described, by himself, to Jāṇussoṇi in the Monastery of Anātha-Piṇḍika in Sāvatthi, the capital of the Kosala country.

Meditative Posture

The Buddha generally used the sitting posture for meditation, trance, absorption, supramundane insight, etc. But he also organised deep meditations in standing, walking to and fro (caṅkamaṇa), reclining, and lying down postures as well. It is recorded that he had fully organised, on his death-bed, trances, in the ascending and descending order from the First to the Last or the cessation of consciousness and feeling and vice versa. Then again he rose up from the First to the Fourth Trance. And the moment he came down from the Fourth Trance, simultaneously at the same moment the Buddha is reported to have expired or entered into Mahāpari-nibbāna. For a person cannot die while the person is dwelling in a trance; physical death occurs only in the material sphere (kāmāvacara loka). It is not a dogmatic conception, but a verity recognized in all oriental systems of meditation.

Now to resume the posture for meditation, the above four postures (iriyā-patha), viz., sitting, standing, walking to and fro, and lying down, are taken as equally useful. It fact, we can practically think over anything in any one of these positions equally well. But Siddhārtha, the Shākya Prince, had organized the First Trance while he was seated under the shade of a rose-apple tree in a farming field near the city of Kapilavastu. The Buddha has invariably recommended, for an amateur, a sitting posture for meditation: "One should sit down, forming a seat (pallaṅka) by binding the thighs (with the legs), setting up the upper part of the body erect (so that the backbone be straight), and keeping mindfulness fully alert around in front toward the object or subject of meditation)". Such is an introductory paragraph oft-repeated in the Canon; its meaning is being given here in consonance with the text, Buddhaghoṣa's commentary on the Ānāpāna-Sati-Kathā (description of mindfulness on respi-

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rations), and the explanation of Dhammapāla in *Paramatthamañjūsā*, or *Mahā-tīkā*.

The Yoga Posture

The postures are extensively described in many oriental yoga systems. When these positions are practised with the holding up of respiration as well, they are treated of in the category of mudrā in the Haṭha Yoga. The mudrā is practised for the purpose of arousing the latent psychic power termed Kuṇḍalini or generally known as 'serpent power'. In the Nepalese tradition there was formerly a famous practice called 'The Restraining of Nine Doors'. It was a forcible device of stopping respiration through so called nine means of in and out breathing, viz., two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, one urinating aperture, and one anus. These nine doors were stopped with fingers and foot-heels. In his six years' austerities, the Bodhisatto had also tried to stop the breathings forcibly, the description of which is not however fully clear enough to connect it with the nine-door-practice mentioned above.

The *Vyāṣa-Bhāṣya* on the 46th Sūtra of the second part of the *Yoga-sūtra*, commenting on "What affords steady comfort is posture" (Sthira-Sukham Āsanam), says: "We shall deal with postures, etc. Therein these are such as lotus-posture, hero-posture,...svastikam,.....paryaṅkam,.....samasthānam, sthira-sukham, yathā-sukham, etc." Vijñāna Bhikṣu hereon remarks: "Whatever (as many) kinds of animals exist, as many postures are there. "Both the sub-commentators, Miśra and Bhikṣu, give short descriptions of these twelve postures. Bhojarāja and others have cursorily touched on it. Herein the posture of Paryaṅka is of special interest to us. Firstly, the Pāli word, Pallaṅka, may be thought as equivalent to Paryaṅka. Secondly, the *Lalita-vistara* in the eleventh chapter gives a sentence, "There the Bodhi-sattva sat down, under the shade, in Paryaṅka."

P.T.S.'s Pāli Dictionary, at p. 442, derives the word, pallaṅka, from pariaṅka (lap), and asks us to compare it with the classical Sanskrit word, palyaṅka (a bed) and its Māgadhi form, paliyaṅka. It is strange to find the meaning of this posture, as "the paryaṅka is lying down (śayanam) with the two arms knee-spread" (spread over the knees) in the comments of both Miśra

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and Bhikṣu. We can easily conceive that the real import of this posture had been forgotten by their time. Moreover, this posture was not the Padmāsana, or lotus-posture, or 'the cross-legged over the thighs' posture as conceived and understood. It should be here realised that the lotus-posture is difficult to maintain, for a period of more than three hours continuously. An amateur may sit in this posture for about an hour with some discomfort increasing every minute. There are of course a few adapt meditationists who can sit in it with ease and presumably also with comfort for a whole day.

Hand Positions and Symbols

In the Canon and Commentaries, we do not find any stipulation of the hand position in sitting postures. As an exception, the Buddha did touch the earth with his right hand to show that the earth is, even though it is inanimate, a witness to his former merits. Still the commentators have not thought it necessary to describe the right and proper positions of the hands in sitting-down postures for meditation. Even the *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya* is satisfied with naming the twelve postures only. It is only in the sub-commentaries of Miśra, Bhikṣu, and others that we find the stipulation about placing hands in different postures. Probably the description of setting up the body erect was thought enough and the hands could be placed in the best way to one's comfort only to help keep the body in an erect position. But the literature on later yoga-postures always specifies hand-positions.

Hand-symbols are fully developed in Tāntric practices, Buddhist, Hindu, etc. There are hundreds of such symbols full of significance. It is worth observing a long series of such signs being quickly and successively shown or performed by an expert or an adept during a particular or ceremonial worship. Originally, this method might have gradually evolved to express the mental sentiments without the need of verbal recitations or prayers; but later incantations were introduced into it. From the meditative point of view, the former is seemingly more helpful than the latter. Nevertheless the latter introduction became so abundant and overpowering that the purpose of meditation itself was lost in the midst of its allurements.

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Eyes' Position

In meditation the position of the eyes is also important. Although we have five sense-organs, one of them, the eyes, is given particular attention. This is because we are generally attracted to the object of visual sense. The words, phrases, or sentences we hear are not mere sounds, but they carry some meanings that draw our attention towards their import, subjective or objective. Therefore the auditory sense is thought to cause a disturbing factor in meditation. The rest of the senses, those of smell, taste, and touch, are ordinarily ignored, inasmuch as they do not cause any appreciable hindrance in meditation. The eyes are naturally directed and rested, as required in the kasiṇa method of Buddhaghoṣa. He also speaks of "the tip of the nose" in the Ānāpāna (respiration) section of the 8th chapter of the *Visuddhi-magga*. The commentator on this work, Dhammapāla has nothing more to explain than what the author has done. It seems therefore that the gazing at the tip of the nose was not generally practised in the kamma-ṭṭhānas of Buddhaghoṣa. On the contrary, we find the practice of resting the eyes on the nose-tip or higher up between the eye-brows, often mentioned in the Hindu meditative system. Nevertheless the *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya,* commenting on the first sūtra of the third part of the *Yoga-sūtra*, enumerates internal subtle spots and subjects for binding the mind to, among which the nose-tip is one.

Another method is to shutt he eyes. The Buddha has never taught the shutting of the eyes to any disciple. As a child, or a youth, or a recluse, the Shākya Prince does not appear to have adopted any such abnormal device to restrict the eyes. The oft-repeated phrase of "Keeping the mindfulness fully alert around in front (towards the subject or object of meditation)" implies that the eyes were open, not closed, and rested just in front. Even in the cessation of consciousness and feeling, the highest stage of the Buddhistic trance, the eyes do not appear to have been shut. Hence an amateur should practise meditation with the eyes open, not closed; they may of course become gradually half-closed due to some fatigue.

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Discovery of Unique Trance

We are now going to deal with the unique trance the Shākya Prince, Sarvārtha-siddha or Siddhārtha, or Siddhāttha, discovered under the shade of a rose-apple tree growing in a certain farming field near the city of Kapilavastu. The ancient suttas, texts, works, and commentaries corroborate it. The versions of this incident differ in details, but never in the main theme. The variation in the age at which he attained this trance is annoying. No one has ever tried to reconcile it. Nevertheless, the fact of his attaining the trance, the real basis on which the later development of his own system can be traced back to stand, shines forth dispelling our logical doubts about the nucleus from which a free and fresh world religion like that of Buddhism emerged. Since we shall have to quote the relevant portions from different sources and then deal with its unique significance in the field of natural meditation, it is necessary to deal with them under separate headings.

NOTES

1. Sign arising upon a natural earth, etc. The sign of an earth kasiṇa means the visualization of the entire surface of the earth kasiṇa looked at for practice. Buddhaghoṣa gives us a full description of such a kasiṇa made artificially upon the ground at a secluded place. The area of such a kasiṇa is limited, being of one foot in diameter. It is easier to gaze at such a limitated spot than to look at natural ground that would be much larger and ill-defined. He means to say that the sign or vivid picture of the natural (not prepared) ground would appear before the eyes or the mind of a merited person only, and not before that of an ordinary person. When the sign, whether upon an artificially prepared disc or an unprepared natural ground, appears before the eyes, the appearance of the form would seem separate from the object.

2. Black (blue?) The colour of the earth is given here as black, while Buddhaghoṣa says the colour of defective earth is blue, yellow, etc. It appears that the blue colour is equivalent to black, because darkness is said to be produced by the practice of a blue kasiṇa. Moreover, black is regarded as an inauspicious colour or appearance and replaced, at least in thought, by blue colour.

3. Reverend Nāṇamoli. *The Path of Purification* (*Visuddhi-magga*), Bhadantā-cariya Buddhaghoṣa. Translated from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli, p. 129, fn 8. Published by R. Semage, Colombo, Ceylon 956.

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IV

Trance under the Rose-Apple Tree

Canonical Version

IN THE Pāli Canon itself we do not find the full description of the Buddha's early life. We find however the reminiscences of the Buddha. One reminiscence is given of this early trance he organized and dwelt therein under the shade of the rose-apple tree, when he had already experienced the futility of six years' austerities in Uru-velā Senānigama (according to the commentary, uru-velā means the great heap of sands, and senā-nigama means army-town, or senāni-gāma means the village of Senāni, the father of Sujātā); the site was near the river, Nerañjarā. These reminiscences are found exactly in the same wordings in three suttas of the Pāli *Majjhima Nikāya* as follows:

In the 36th sutta, "Mahā-saccaka Sutta," it is given thus: "Buddha was staying in the Kūṭāgāra-sālā of the Great Forest near the city of Vesāli. There a great scholar named Saccaka Nigañṭha-putta (not a follower of the Teacher, Niganṭha) came to visit the Buddha." In a discussion with him, the Buddha thought it necessary to recount to Saccaka, his early strivings. After describing his austerities to him, he says, "Nevertheless, by this bitter austerity I do not acquire the superhuman capabilities and the special insight of the ultimate noble knowledge (alam-ariya-ñāṇa). Is there perhaps another way for Bodhi

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(Complete Enlightenment)?" Then he, referring to his former experience, continues: "O Aggivessana (Saccaka), that it occurred to me—I verily remember it; I was seated in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, in my father Shākya's farming (Pitu Saccassa kammante); quite separate from material desires (kāmehi) and separate from evil thoughts, I had organized and dwelt in the First Trance (Jhāna) consisting of Vitakka, Vicāra, and joy and pleasure born of seclusion." The words vitakka vicāra, have been already considered above under the subheading 'Vitakka'.

If he had already attained the first trance, we may naturally ask why he resorted to such severe austerities for such a long time. He discloses the reason in the above discourse. Continuing the account to Saccaka, the Buddha says: "Then to me, O Aggivessana, it occurred—Is it that I am afraid of that pleasure, which pleasure is away from material desires, away from evil thoughts?" Then, addressing him again in the same manner, the Buddha concludes it thus: "Nay, I am not afraid of that pleasure..." But such a natural trance could not be well organized, while the physical body was extremely attenuated due to long austerities. Again resuming his talk with Saccaka, the Buddha tells him of his final decision thus: "But it is not easy to get that pleasure with such an extremely attenuated body. Why should not I take solid food, such as cooked rice and curry (odana kummāsa)?" Then he goes on to tell Saccaka how he began to take solid food and thereby gather strength. Soon after this, the Buddha told Saccaka that he organized the first, second, third, and fourth trances and dwelt therein. On the basis of these trances, he developed and obtained the three superhuman and supernormal knowledges and ultimately attained complete Enlightenment. This is from the 36th sutta of the first part "Mūla-Paṇṇāsaka" of the *Majjhima Nikāya.*

The second similar account is found in the 35th sutta of the second part "Majjhima-Paṇṇāsaka" of the same *Nikāya.* It is named "Bodhi-Rājakumāra Sutta." The Buddha was then staying in the Migadāva or deer-park of the Bhesakalā forest in the Susumāra Mountain, in the country of Bhaggas. The Prince Bodhi had newly built a palace namedKokanada or Red-lotus.

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He invited the Buddha and his disciples to the palace to be first used by them. There the Prince opened the discourse with the remark, "To me, Revered Sir (Bhante), it appears—pleasure is not obtained through pleasure; it is through pain that pleasure is gained." Then affirming his remark, the Buddha related to him his (the Buddha's) own early conception thus: "To me also, Rājakumāra, previous to my Enlightenment, when I was yet a candidate (Bodhisatto) for enlightenment and not fully enlightened, it appeared thus—Not verily through pleasure, pleasure is to be gained; it is through pain that pleasure should be obtained." Then he relates to the Prince the story of his leaving home and hearth in search of Truth. The Buddha continues this narrative, through all the salient features of his wanderings and austerities, and thereby attaining complete Enlightenment and setting up in motion the wheel of dhamma. Herein we discern the reason which debarred him from carrying the first trance to its natural and logical culmination. The prejudice against pleasure and leaning towards austerities is clearly seen to have come in between the first discovery of trance and its full-fledged climax by the Shākya scion, Sarvārtha-siddha, or the Bodhisatto.

The third account similar to that of the first one is provided in the 5th or the last sutta of the second part of the same *Nikāya*, entitled the "Saṅgārava Sutta." The Buddha was then staying in the Mango forest belonging to the Todeyya Brāhmans in Calcali-kappa village in Kosala. There lived a Buddhist Brāhman woman named Dhānañjāni. She was devoted to the Buddha and from time to time used to express her respect towards him by a famous Buddhist formula of prayer "Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sam-buddhassa." This formula means in short, Salutation to that revered, liberated, and fully enlightened Buddha. This frequent utterance of that Brāhmaṇi annoyed a Brāhman scholar named Saṅgārava. A protest from the Brāhman to her drew a challenge to him also from her. The Brāhman decided to see the Buddha when he would visit the village. When the Buddha came over there and stayed in the Mango forest, the Brāhman was informed of it and he went there to see the Buddha. The Brāhman put him a question: "There are, O Gotama (the Buddha), some ascetics

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and Brāhmans, who claim an original Brahmacariya by declaring that they have attained the perfection of the end of knowledge in the present life and world. Therein, O Gotama, . . . which one of them are you, Gotama?" The Buddha replied that there are differences in them. Some claim it by accomplishing the study of the scriptures, such as Tevijja Brahmans. Some do so by faith alone, such as Takki Vimamsi. Introducing the third category, the Buddha said, "There are, O Bhāradvāja (Saṅgārava), some ascetics and Brāhmans, who claim an original Brahma-cariya, after having realized the supreme knowledge, by themselves, of the phenomena (dhammā) previously unheard of, by declaring that they have attained the perfection of the end of knowledge in the present life and world. I am among them. So by this reason (pariyāya) also, O Bhāradvāja, it should be understood that, as they are . . . who claim . . . , I am among them."

This assertion of "previously unheard of" knowledge seemingly induced the Buddha to relate, to him, an account of his (Buddha's) early life, strivings, renunciation, austerities, the reminiscence of the first trance under the rose-apple tree, development of this trance, and finally the attainment of enlightenment. This early experience of the Shākya Prince was presumably opportune to convince the scholar that the discovery of this trance and its natural and logical development was previously unheard of. Such a system is not found in any of the scriptures the Brāhman scholar was well-versed in. If it were merely the philosophical tenets, the scholar would have understood it by a few sentences, as we can do even now. The later opposing philosophical works have actually stated, in a summary of Buddhism, that everything is momentary, transitory, suffering, and with its own characteristic properties and hence void.

In the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, we do not find any reference to this in the early life of the Buddha, excepting the mention of Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāma-putta and the first five Shākya Brāhman disciples, etc. They remind us, of course of the early life and six years' striving of the Shākya Prince. Along with the above we have the first declaration of the Buddha to Upaka Ājīvaka, while the Buddha was journeying, towards

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Benares, between the Bodhi tree in Uru-velā and Gayā. We have elsewhere touched on the subject of such a declaration; this pronouncement was, to all appearances, not necessary to a casual wayfarer such as an ājivaka; but as we have already discussed above, such a declaration is a natural impulse. The inner realization or experience of a mystic is ordinarily a guarded secret; no mystic will be found easily to disclose it to any casual questioner; the rule on this subject in the Vinaya is very strict; other works on yoga or meditation advise the amateur that he should not disclose his realization to any outsider; specially in the Kuṇḍalini (so-called serpent-power) meditative system, none of the practicers will unguardedly tell anyone of his actual inner experience. So the First Declaration of the Buddha to this Ājivaka was not without deep significance. Only this single pronouncement should have been enough to convert the entire human society, if the members of it were not obsessed with some bias and prejudice. We shall deal with its significance in later phases of this research also.

Commentatorial Descriptions

In the commentary of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, Papañca-sūdani, Buddhaghoṣa, commenting on the 36th sutta of the first part entitled "Mahā-saccaka sutta," as mentioned above, has a story to tell us concerning the Buddha's reminiscence touching the first trance organized by him, "In my father Shākya's farming" quoted in the same connection above. The Pāli text reads: "Pitu Sakkassa kammante" meaning—'while Father Shākya was farming—or in the farming field of Father Shākya.' Both the meanings point to the place of the occurrence of the trance. Here Buddhaghoṣa does not give us the meaning, but records a story of Ploughing Festival for seed-sowing. The same story with a slightly shortened form in the beginning is also found in the introduction of the Pāli Jātaka verses of the Khuddaka Nikāya—the *Nidāna Kathā*.

We should have expected some comments on the early life of the Shākya scion, related by the Buddha himself in the other two suttas mentioned above as well; but Buddhaghoṣa refers to the commentary on the same 36th sutta for further comments.

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The story of the Ploughing Festival in the two versions is substantially the same, but the sequence of the story in the *Nidāna Kathā* helps us to guess the age of the Shākya Prince at the time of this meditative attainment. It was a day of the Ploughing Festival (wappa-maṅgala, literally an auspicious sowing); on this day the King, the ministers, and the farmers all took part in the ploughing of the field (evidently for the sowing of seeds). The Prince was also taken to the farm along with the royal family and retinue. The sequence is like this: the infant was born in the Lumbini Grove; the baby was seen by a clairvoyant saint named Kāla-devala and prophesied as a future Buddha; on the fifth day there was a naming ceremony of the baby. To this function one hundred and eight learned Brāhmans were called in; eight Brāhmans out of them were physiognomists and astrologers; seven of them predicted him either to be a universal sovereign or a Buddha, but the youngest one, Koṇḍañño, prophesied only that he would become a Buddha.

The prophecy was kept in mind; the idea of a world-sovereign gave much hope to the Shākyas; the baby was taken care of by appointing many nurses. The baby began to grow excellently. Then the Ploughing Festival came off, as mentioned above. After this incident the Bodhisatto gradually reached the age of sixteen years. So his age falls between the range of a few months to sixteen years, when the trance was attained by him. As hinted at before, the range has become still wider, when Nāgasena says that the Bodhisatto was then one month old (eka-masiko samāno); he was five months old, according to the Ceylonese works, *Pūjāwaliya*, translated and given in the book entitled *A Manual of Buddhism* translated from Sinhalese manuscripts by Rev. Robert Spence Hardy.[1] He writes at p. 150 of the book: "Five months after the birth of Siddhārtha there was a festival, at which the King was accustomed to hold the plough." These are from the Pāli sources. We shall also give the age on that occasion, as found in the works of mixed Sanskrit, and other sources as well.

Age from Maha-vastu-Avadana

In the Mixed Sanskrit work, Mahā-vastuavadāna Manuscript on leaf 70, the incident is said to have occurred thus: "King

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Shuddhodana, with the seraglio (sāntah-puro) and the prince (kumāra), went to the site of the garden. Walking in the site of the garden, Bodhisattva reached the Agriculture Village (Kriṣi-grāma) ... etc." After this sight, thinking: "Lest the prophecy of Saint Asita become true," the King sought to surround the prince with young girls and arranged for gathering Shākyas' daughters to choose a bride for the prince. This account helps us to guess the age of the Prince to be marriageable at the time.

Upagupta's Mention

In the Kuṇāla-Avadāna of the Divyāvadāna, the Monk Upagupta, the guide to Aśoka in his pilgrimage, points to him the sites in sequence. These are firstly, the site of the birthplace, Lumbini grove, then that of Kapilavastu. In Kapilavastu the Monk showed the holy places in sequential order as follows: the place where the Bodhisattva as a baby was brought before the King; the temple of the Shākya family deity named "Shākya-Vardha" where he was carried over for worship; the place where he was shown to the sign-reading learned Brāhmans; the site where he was prophesied, by the Rishi Asita, as a future Buddha; the arena where the tournament took place; the wrestling ground of the Bodhisattva; his pleasure palace; the site where he sought a resorting grove after being troubled at the sight of the aged, diseased, and deceased. Then the Monk pointed out to Aśoka the place wherein under the shade of the rose-apple tree, the Bodhisattva attained the trance. After this the Monk showed King Aśoka the door out of which the Bodhisattva went away from Kapilavastu at midnight. This sequence gives us a sort of definite estimation of the age to be about twenty-nine at which the Prince attained the trance.

In the Aśokāvadāna-mālā Manuscript, on leaves 54 and 55, we find the Monk Upagupta leading the royal pilgrimage entourage. The pilgrimage of King Aśoka started from the capital, firstly, to the Lumbini grove in Saint Kapila's Pura. In a subsequential order the Monk showed to the King the different places connected with the Bodhisattva's early life as mentioned above with a little difference in detail only. After seeing the aged, diseased, and deceased, the Bodhisattva much distressed

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sought out the grove (vana). Then the incident occurred under the rose-apple tree. Then visiting the King, his father, in the palace at midnight, the Bodhisattva asked his permission to renounce everything.

Asvaghosa's Poetic Version

In the second canto of the *Buddha-carita*, the poet says that the King gave to his son the name of Sarvārtha-siddha. In order to forestall his going away to the forest, as prophesied earlier by the great sage Asita, the Shākya King associated him with Yashodharā, an accomplished bride. In course of time, from Yashodharā, a son named Rāhula was born to the son of Shuddhodana (that is Siddhārtha). All the Bodhisattvas go away to the forest after having a son born to them. They enjoy pleasure till they are possessed of the Bodhi.

In the third canto the Prince sees an aged person created by the Devas of the Pure Abode. Similarly he sees a diseased man. Again he sees a dead body borne away and similarly created. This sight was seen only by the two, the charioteer and the Prince. In the fourth canto the Prince holds an interesting talk with Udāyi, the son of the royal preceptor, and also his friend.

In the fifth canto the Prince issues forth with a wish to see the forest. He rides the horse, Kaṇṭhaka, and is accompanied by pleasant companions. Attracted by the forest, the Prince rides farther on and sees the earth being ploughed. Touched with the compassion for the toiling men and beasts, he gets off the horse and walks slowly on the ground. Desiring loneliness and stopping his companions from following him, he heads towards the rose-apple tree and sits down under it. Here the incident of the First Trance occurs. He begins to cogitate over the import of the world. Then unseen by and to others, a person in an ascetic garb appears before him. After a talk on renunciation, the ascetic disappeared into the air. After this event, the Prince visited his father and asked the latter's permission for his renunciation. Then the sun set. The same night he leaves the city of Kapilavastu.

In the twelfth canto the Bodhisattva undergoes six years' austerities. Then he finally comes to the conclusion: "This

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piety (dharma) is neither for desirelessness, nor for enlightenment, nor for liberation. What I had obtained under the rose-apple tree at that time is a sure method." The tradition on which the poet develops his poetry shows that his age was twenty-nine at the time of his attaining the first trance.

Lalita-vistara Version

The sequence of events in the *Lalita-vistara* gives the incident of trance a range of years for his age between his education and the display of his prowess in a public tournament. It is recorded in the full chapter (parivarta) entitled "Kriṣi-grāma", the eleventh one of the *Lalita-vistara*. After the completion of his education described in the preceding chapter, this parivarta opens thus: "In such a way, O Monks, (here the Buddha is reciting it to the assembly of monks, etc., in the Jetavana Vihāra in Srāvasti), the Kumāra (Prince) grew up. Then on a certain occasion (samaya), the Kumāra, with other ministers' sons, went out to see the Agriculture Village (Kriṣi-grāma). After observing the agricultural works, he went aside and entered the site of the garden. With a troubled mind, strolling about there alone and not followed by anyone else, he saw a nice-looking rose-apple (jambu) tree. There in its shade, the Bodhisattva sat down in a paryaṅka (a posture forming a seat described above)." Here he organized the first, second, third, and fourth trances, one after another. Nāgasena also says that the Bodhisattva, seated in a pallaṅka (paryaṅka) under the cool shade of the rose-apple tree, in the farming field of his father, the Shākya, had organized the first . . . to fourth trances.

Account from Other Sources

A Manual of Buddhism,[2] translated from Sinhalese Manuscripts, as mentioned above, has a little different tale to tell us. The learned author of the work writes, in the foot-note on p. 141 under the seventh chapter, as follows: "The matter contained in this chapter is principally translated from the *Pūjāwaliya;* except in the few instances in which the name of a different work is inserted at the end of the section." It is given, at p. 518 under item No. 4 in the Appendix, that the work, *Pūjāwaliya* (evidently in Sanskritized Sinhalese meaning—a series

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of worships), "was composed by Mayūrapāda (the foot of the Peacock), who flourished in the reign of Parākrama Bāhu III, (A.D. 1267-1301)." He further writes that the original work, evidently in the Elu or Sinhalese language, had 34 sections in 800 pages. "Nearly all . . . refer to some incident in the life of Gotama Buddha." This work is a proof of our notion that there were several versions of the life of the Siddhārtha even in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Buddhaghoṣa himself says in the *Nidāna Kathā* that there are other commentaries (Sesa-aṭṭhā kathā) and also that the opinion of the followers of Canonical Nikāyas differs.

Towards the end of the section of Chapter VII at p. 150, Rev. R.S. Hardy writes: "Five months after the birth of Siddhārtha there was a festival . . . the prince was taken to the field, where a couch was prepared for him . . . under the thick foliage of damba (*sic* jamba or jambu?) tree; . . . when Bodhisat (sattva?) saw that he was left alone, he arose from his couch and by the power of ānāpāna-smerti (smriti?)—bhāwanā, ascended into the air, where he sat a little distance from the ground, without any support." There is no mention of the first trance as found in all the versions, Pāli and mixed Sanskrit. In other versions, on the contrary, there is no mention of the lifting up of his seat into the air. Ānāpāna or the practice on respiration previous to his first trance is not recorded in the Northern versions including Nāgasena's *Milinda-Questions*.

Miracles in Trances

We have already discussed above miracles in Buddhism. They are profusely recorded in the Canon, commentaries and literature of all the sects of Buddhism. We cannot deny it. No religion is free from such phenomena. They emphasize some facts, as already mentioned above, which we are recommended forcibly not to pass over. So the miracle is to be interpreted, which surrounds the Prince's organizing the Trances and his dwelling therein. The incident of the trance occurred, according to the Canon and commentaries, under the cool shade of the rose-apple tree in the Shākyan farming field near the city of Kapilavastu or Kapila-vatthu. Due to this supernormal trance, the shadow cast by the sun against the tree remained around it protecting the

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Buddhisattva from the summer sun. This shows the powerful depth of the Bodhisattva's Trance that arrested the shadow of the tree cast at the time of his organizing the trance until he arose therefrom. It is no wonder in the eyes of any deep meditationists. To the latter the phenomenon of internalization and and externalization in deep meditation is well known. But the arresting of physical phenomena thus is a difficult matter to explain.

Tibetan Source

The Life of the Buddha[3], said to have been "derived from Tibetan works in the Bkah-Hgyur, and Bstam Hgyur, is a famous work translated by W. Woodville Rockhill. The first of the two collections, *Kanjur*, is regarded as the Word of the Buddha; and the second, *Tan-jur*, consists of commentaries and non-canonical books. In Chapter II of the book, on pages 22 and 23, the author, W. W. Rockhill, gives us a short account of the incident. It was, when the prince had been married to Gopā, the daughter of the Shākya Kinkinisvara, and after he had seen the famous four signs on his drive to the park, in a village where the Shākya king had sent his son to look at "the ploughmen. But there he saw the labourers, . and the work-oxen...His tender heart was touched with compassion." On enquiry he learned that the labourers were the king's property, that is, slaves. He freed the men and also the oxen. "Then, seeing a shady jambu-tree on one side, he sat down at its foot and gave himself to earnest meditation; and there his father found him, and lo the shade had not moved from where he was." The earnest meditation is the trance of other versions. The age must be quite mature when the four signs impressed his mind so deeply as to make him renounce his home forthwith.

Chinese Travellers' Version

On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India 629-645 A.D. is a renowned work in two volumes. It is a translation, by Thomas Watters, of the *Hsi-yu-chi* (or *Si-yu-ki*) or *Records of Western Lands*. The first translator was M. Julien in French, the second was Rev. S. Beal in English, the third is T. Watters whose authoritative work was edited, after his death, by T. W. Rhys

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Davids and S.W. Bushell. Besides this work, all the three translators also gave us the life of the Pilgrim. From pp. 7 and 8 of the second volume of the work, the following accounts of the same incident are given here:

"The pilgrim continuing his description relates that above 40 li to the north-east of Kapilavastu was a tope at the place where the young—heir-apparent—(that is the P'usa while a young prince) sat in the shade of a tree watching ploughers at work. While so sitting he became absorbed in samādhi, and obtained emancipation from cravings. The King, his father, observing that while his son was lost in ecstatic meditation, the sun's rays turned back and the tree gave him continued shade, became convinced of the miraculous sanctity of his son, and felt for him an increased reverence." This is the author's translation of the famous pilgrim's Chinese composition. The word—emancipation from cravings—means in effect arhatship. The author also gives us a gist from three other Chinese works that we have already quoted in the Mixed Sanskrit originals.

The Travels of Fa-hsien (399—414 A.D.), or Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms, re-translated by H. A. Giles, is a book consisting of some hundred pages. It gives us only a very short reference to the incident at pp 37 and 38 as follows: "Several li to the north-east of the city was the arable land belonging to the crown, where the Heir Apparent sat under a tree and watched men ploughing."

Since the size of the book is small, the account given herein is naturally found to be scanty; but the reference to the spot is noteworthy.

Five Saints' Stoppage

The incident of the trances has a further development. It presents another facet of the miracle we are not at present attracted to; but in the time of compiling the scriptures these miracles were not thought to be so unimportant as to be set aside with impunity. These stories give us double miracles, one of the two is the journey of the saints through the air, another is its arrest or stoppage by the externalizing force of the Prince's Trance. The Southern and Northern Scriptures and Commentaries have recorded many events of such overpowering forces: but they

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were often directed by the will of some powerful agents. Here the Bodhisattva was seemingly not consciously using his will against any intruders. It is given, so far as is known in the case, in the *Mahā-vastu-avadāna* and *Lalita-vistara* only. In both the accounts, there are five Rishis or saints involved; but the account of the *Mahā-vastu-avadāna* states that they were journeying through the air, from the side of the Himalayas to the Vindhya, that is, to the south; whereas the *Lalita-vistara* says that they were doing so to the northern direction from the southern. Other accounts are, although words differ, not dissimilar in their purport and significance.

These Rishis are stopped, in their journey above the rose-apple tree unable to cross the tree. They are bewildered. They voice their confusion. A certain deity informs them of the cause, that it is due to the meditative Lakṣmi (Goddess of wealth or Treasure: Success) of the son of the Shākya King. They express their profound hope that the one in such a meditation will enlighten, delight, and liberate the world. The account of the *Lalita-vistara* is much fuller than that of the *Mahā-vastu-avadāna*. This episode is recorded in verses in both, but it is still more developed and put in a dialogue form in the *Lalita-vistara*. In the latter the Rishis come down from the air and praise the Boddhisattva each in a verse, one by one. After showing their respect to him, they go away on their journey. Moreover the *Lalita-vistara* gives the account substantially also in eighteen verses (stanzas, ślokas). In the latter case the verses give more details of the trance: "It was mid-day; he was accompanied by 500 companions; he had not informed his parents of his intention; he had approached the jambu-tree shade, and taking up the straw and spreading it there himself, sat down in a paryaṅka seat; then the Bodhisattva straightened up the body and contemplated the auspicious four trances." As already mentioned above, Nāgasena also corroborates that the Bodhisattva organized the four trances under the rose-apple tree shade before the Shakyan farming field.

Remembrance

Basides the Canonical texts mentioned before, both the two mixed Sanskrit words reiterate the reminiscence of the Buddha

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regarding the early trance. The *Mahā-vastu-avadāna* manuscript leaf No. 99 contains the following account: "The Bodhisattva, dissatisfied with the system of Udraka, went away... and reached Uruvilva...while roaming for alms, passed a house belonging to a village headman, at the time of the gathering of men and women therein. The daughter of the headman named Sujātā, a learned lady, saw the ascetic prince and was filled with overwhelming emotion..."There in the penance forest-camp (tapo-vana) the Bodhisattva went and began to perform severe austerities. So one day he thought: "Having undergone austerities in the forest for six years, and dispelling karma-accumulations (karma-kṣaye), I obtained a correct memory, by which I knew that I had gone astray into a wrong path (vipatha-pathena asmi gato). This is not the way to liberation (nāyam mārgo mokṣaye asti). Therein I remembered—I had obtained before, under the jambu-tree in the garden of the Shākya King, the First Trance well organized. That must be the way to enlightenment...." This reference is a sure guide to our thesis.

The eighteenth chapter of the *Lalita-vistara* is a short one; in the previous chapter the Bodhisattva's six years' austerity is described under the same heading; now in this chapter we come across Māra's attempt to persuade him to renounce the attempt after his search and return to a meritorious householder's life. He retorts to Māra in strong terms and drives him off. Then the Bodhisattva considers his fruitless penances and comes to the decision: "This is not the way for enlightenment (nāyam mārgo bodheh)...Is it perhaps that there is another way for bodhi?" He continues his life-story: "Then, O Monks, it occurred to me— I had, in my father's garden, being seated under the shade of the jambu-tree, organized...the First Trance... till the Fourth Trance... and dwelt therein. Is it perhaps the way to enlightenment?...In consonance with that, there came up a thought to me that it is the way to enlightenment." The description is so clear as to need no further elucidation.

Guide to Meditation

From what has been discussed so far, it must have been clear that the First Trance discovered by Siddhārtha during his household life was so unique as to make him recite it several

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times on important public occasions. The miracle surrounding this event has turned it also into a sort of early miracle. Consequently the commentators have not given to it a practical consideration. Because of the miracle, we have also thought that the meditation must have been something abnormal and possible only for a candidate to Buddhahood. But the reminiscence can be only taken in a humanly practicable sense; otherwise he would not have encouraged the listener with its special mention. It will be our endeavour to find out its method of organizing and dwelling in it in this research.

We have seen how we become beset with authoritative matters, when we were dealing with the topics of "the nature of the mind, vitakka, ābhoga, and others". Hence we propose to deal with the main thesis of this research here in a different manner. We shall go on explaining the method of Siddhārtha's organizing the first stage of meditation, as conceived by us, not arbitrarily but based on the Canon, commentaries, and literature, read and understood in the light of our own faithful experience. It may sound presumptuous to many. But a well-earned reprimand from Buddhist scholars and savants would be more welcome and preferable to one's humble conscience than an unearned admiration for following the traditional line and method. I am not interfering with any tenet, doctrine, or discipline of Buddhist Schools current and known to me. With this exposition of the trance, therefore, I shall have to follow a method of simply explaining the steps of the meditation leading to its realization without quoting for each of these steps from or referring to authoritative passages and works. For, if the latter sources be so brought in, the exposition will, I am afraid, become confusing and thereby be of little help to any would-be amateurs of the Buddha's own system of meditation.

It should be understood here that meditation in general is not fundamentally different from any system whatsoever. By this I mean to say that the general characteristic of meditation in each system would basically be the same. The difference is very often that of preconception ranging from blind faith and worship to abstract thought. The Prince, Bodhisattva, or even Buddha's method was entirely free from such a conception from the very beginning. Such a position was later analyzed

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into a philosophical system quite distinct from any other. But from the point of view of meditation, the main difference lies in attachment and non-attachment, so to say briefly, to the object or subject, faith or worship, philosophic or abstract thought, or even divinity or liberation conceived as a target of meditation. It is, from the very nature of the Buddha's method, non-attachment to any meditative target whatsoever. It needed great courage to retain such a stand from the beginning to the end, and Siddhārtha, Bodhisattva, and Buddha and even his disciples demonstrated this unswerving courage.

Preliminaries

The sitting posture for meditation has already been described above; the position of the arms or hands was also indicated therein; the position of the eyes was rather cursorily dealt with; the need to keep the body upright is not explained satisfactorily anywhere. The place of meditation should be as a rule favourable to seclusion or loneliness. A chair or a couch or a bed is not used for a sitting purpose in meditation; it may not hinder the flow of meditation afterwards, but generally the ground is preferred. The time for meditation may be morning or evening; but the time after midday or after midday lunch had been invariably recommended for amateurs, novices, and even savants; it is a fact that the time is very good for meditation after a meal. The keeping of the body in an erect position for a long time is not easy; the insistence upon doing so is understandable in the system of meditation in the Kuṇḍalini system, but here the reason is not quite clear. We cannot connect this system with that of Kuṇḍalini. With a few months' practice, the required position will not cause, I believe, much discomfort.

The eyes should not be shut or closed; they should be kept normally open; it is not a practice for constant gazing as in that of Trāṭaka; so they may be opened or closed at one's ease or habit; but with a few months' practice they remain open for a longer and longer duration. The eyes are only rested on the front position; they should not be directed towards any outside objects with any conscious will, desire, or curiosity. The objects presented to the eyes should not be cogitated over; these objects are not to be made an ābhoga of one's mind; one should not

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think over other physical properties than what are presented to the eyes; individual objects are not to be taken into one's consideration; as much as possible vitakka is not to be attended to. A vitakka will appear in words, in phrases, in short or long sentences; it may have been stemming from cause other than one's own will or thinking; when a vitakka manifests itself in the mind, we often mistake it for being of our own making; it often happens to be merely a mental grasp of an outside thing, not our active will. If we begin to take it as our own thinking, we make a mistake of dwelling in it so that the vitakka will continue to talk on and on endlessly.

Gradually the objects will lose their individual separateness; they will present before the eyes a pattern of themselves. Physical properties, such as heaviness, hardness, coarseness, and in short solidity, will not produce their concept in the mind. The view presented by these objects upon the mind will be seen only as they are presented as a pattern; we shall not feel that we are looking at them. They will be felt as if they are seen only. We do not feel ourselves to be called upon to differentiate them; so we are meditating, but the object of our meditation is not an external object; nor is it an internal subject; vitakka loses its speaking; but the mind may conceive something without any verbal sign appearing; vicāra thus moves on instead of vitakka before.

Vitakka and Vicara

These two terms 'Vitakka' and 'Vicāra' have been already mentioned in connection with the constituents of the first trance. The initial two of the five factors or constituents are these very two. But this does not mean that they are themselves the first trance. Vitakka is, by its nature, an initial application of thought, or a gross ābhoga of the mind, towards the object or subject of meditation. In other words, it is a sort of thinking by means of mental speaking. We cannot generally think through clear concepts, from one concept to another, or from one sentiment to another, in the same manner as we do by means of language using it inaudibly in the mind. Thinking by mentally speaking is much easier than doing it otherwise. It is also much clearer than the latter. It gives us finer shades of meaning than the

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other. Moreover, we are habituated to this mentally verbal thinking. Therefore Vitakka becomes prominent in the preliminary states of almost all meditation in the kāmāvacara or material plane, that is, the world we live in.

So an indulgence in vitakka, although unavoidable previous to meditation, is gradually suppressed in organizing the first trance. Suppression does not make vitakka annihilated; it comes up occasionally while organizing, dwelling in the first stage, and even mastering the first trance. Accordingly the first trance is termed sa-vitakka sa-vicāra etc. Besides, there are types of meditation that require vitakka to generate them. But so far as the gradual type of ascending meditation, called the four trances, is concerned, vitakka becomes an intruder to be debarred. When the mind is initially applied towards the object of meditation, it is generally done by means of mentally spoken words. By doing so, we begin to grasp the significance of the object completely, so much so that we have an ābhoga of the mind concerning the object we are going to meditate upon, or we are already absorbed into it. Here the vitakka is taken as a series of similar contents, and not diversified. In the case of the gradual type of meditation, there is no object made a target for meditation, nor is there a subject fixed up in meditation. Hence in such a context, an initial application of thought is nothing more than meditating itself and an abhoga of the mind would mean simply what has been said towards the end of the preceding section.

Vicāra is, by its nature, sustaining the concept generated by the vitakka. So it is called the sustained application of thought. Such a thought may be of a very subtle type, in which case we say that it is a sort of subtle ābhoga of the mind. But in the case of the gradual type of meditation, vicāra comes in only after the said vitakka has ceased thinking by means of mentally spoken language. As we do not fix any object or subject worthy of and needful for meditation, the substained application of thought does not mean anything more than the maintaining of meditation itself. The subtle ābhoga of the mind, in the absence of any subtle object or subject in meditation, means nothing more than the deepening of meditation. Accordingly vicāra also becomes an intruder to be debarred. As mentioned

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in connection with vitakka, vicāra also becomes prominent in the state of wordless conceptual meditation. Similarly an indulgence in vicāra, however subtle and sustainable, is to be gradually suppressed in organizing the first trance. It may rise off and on in the first trance; therefore the first trance is said to consist of constituents such as sa-vitakka, sa-vicāra, etc. As in the case of the former, vicāra alone does not constitute a trance of the gradually ascending type. As an example, in our mundane affairs, we can take up a concept of material significance or a besetting problem, and go on cogitating and deliberating over it for hours together, but it will not produce any trance. It must be a pity that our material endeavour is so void of capability to generate any trance, although it may produce meritorious resultants under certain circumstances.

Sa-vitakka Sa-vicara

The first trance of the gradual type is invariably termed sa-vitakka sa-vicāra. But it should not be thought that the trance consists of these two mental activities only. This trance is called so; the reason that the first stage is brought about by these two factors must be apparent from what has been said above. The aim here is not to maintain them, but due to our mental habits of thinking, they linger on for some time and even in the state of trance may appear off and on without our conscious will. There is another state called samādhi, in which these two factors are made use of in organizing the sa-vitakka sa vicāra samādhi of a different category, and not that of the gradual type. The gradual type is almost always spoken of as Jhāna and not samādhi. So we have four jhānāni on the form plane (rūpāvacara).

Most of the devotional and imaginative categories of meditation come within this field. Even the reciting of various incantations, preliminary to absorption, falls within it. When we recite an incantation or mantra or formula, an inner verbal activity is required. It is a vitākka. With it a concept becomes necessary. Then a vicāra must come in. When the object of meditation is some deified shape or figure and its paraphernalia, imagination is brought into operation. Hence it is quite plain that the Buddha's meditative system is entirely separate

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from such imaginative organization. The incantation, although found in some schools of Buddhism, is not to be expected in the Buddha's own system. It is to be noted here that the Kasiṇa system of Buddhaghosa is not free from the need of reciting some relative word to the kasiṇa. So we cannot regard it to be that of the Master.

Many of the philosophical kinds of introspection or contemplation also come within this field. The content of vitakka and vicāra, when visualized, is spoken of as an insight. This insight, as is wellknown, expounds its own tenet and dogma that was never entertained, by the Buddha, as final, to say the least. Theories about metaphysical elements are to be included in this category.

Besides mental speaking, objects perceived through the five organs of sense, such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, are and may be utilized, through vitakka, for organizing meditation. In the kasiṇa method the visible sign of the kasiṇa is evidently the means of bringing about the after-image and counterpart image of the kasiṇa. External sound is scarcely made an object for meditation. The internal sound, heard when shutting the ears with both the thumbs or fingers of hands, becomes a means of concentration in some system. Similarly, in one of the Haṭha-yoga mudrās named Khecarī, the tongue is well pushed in beyond the soft-palate and then straightened outside. The taste is continuous and so it helps concentration. The sense of touch is rarely made an object excepting in the Kuṇḍalini system. Smell is however an exception. It sometimes manifests itself while meditating in an overwhelming manner, but this sense is not known to serve as an object for meditation itself. But by whatever we know of the Buddha's First Trance, such contrivances were never applied by the Master in organizing it.

To resume our discourse, the first stage is sa-vitakka sa-vicāra and invariably accompanied by joy and pleasure born of seclusion. Joy (pīti) is variously described; it is of common experience, but in meditation it is sometimes overwhelming; it arises when vitakka and vicāra gradually subside. Pleasure (sukha) is a feeling of one's own body being experienced as soft and full of comfort; it is more lasting, so to say

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comparatively, than joy (pīti). This joy should not be made an ābhoga of the mind in consonance with the system we are dealing with. Similarly, it is with pleasure (sukha); it is not so overwhelming as joy; therefore it may not restrain our further progress in meditation; nevertheless, it should not be made an ābhoga of the mind.

Rupavacara or Form-Plane

As described under the sub-heading "Preliminaries" above, the objects before our eyes gradually lose their individual separateness and present themselves. Their physical properties, such as heaviness, coarseness, and in short solidity, begin to disappear, as a concept, in the mind. We do not look at them instead they are seen only as a mere pattern. This pattern begins to separate itself from its material or physical basis, that is, the objects. This pattern appears to be brighter than the objects from which it separated; it looks as if it is suspended in space. Now it should be recognized as quite different from the material objects seen as such before. It is on a form planeor rūpāvacara. There is no imagination; no cogitating is forthcoming over its nature, it is directly at first hand seen quite and fully differentiated from the material or physical concept. At this, joy begins to manifest itself and gradually overfloods the body; the body, without any concept of its material or physical constitution, is felt as soft and uniquely comfortable. We should not indulge in any mental deliberation; we should not activize vitakka and vicāra by ourselves; if they appear, we are not to attend to them; in so doing, they will die out unattended. Now this state of our mind is decidedly quite a distinct state of meditation. It is the First Trance. It is the first entrance into a unique plane of only forms devoid of all material concept. It is rūpāvacara. It is the trance organized, discovered, and dwelt in by the Sarvārthasiddha, or Siddhārtha, or Siddhattha. It is the trance remembered by the Bodhisatto, suddenly or naturally after the futility of his six years' austerities undergone near the river Nerañjarā.

This trance is not difficult to attain. It does not require long practice. Anyone who can sit down upon the ground, composedly and dispelling any material desire or animosity for

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a time, can smoothly organize it. The sitting will need about three hours at a time. The place or resort for meditation should be a lonely place, unfrequented by men, women or children. One should be fully awake and remain calm and quiet while meditating. He should not attend to any bodily discomfort for a time. He is not to repent for what is past and gone. We are to start from the point where we are at present. There is doubt we have to cast off. Doubt may increase; it may stem from our pre-dispositions; it may hamper our endeavour; but it will be always in the shape of vitakka. This doubt may be of a devotional character; it may be of a philosophical type; it may be of mundane utility. So doubt must be discarded. If we stop vitakka and cease mental speaking, doubt will have no means to arise.

Post-trance Mind

It cannot be said beforehand how long the amateur will dwell in this First Trance. But the amateur should never be afraid of time. Without a little inconvenience to worldly matters, one can never aspire to attain even a real sign of meditation or trance. It generally happens that he will feel like rising up from meditation after an hour. Now he will begin to recognize objects, where they are material and where they are only formal. We are not going to impose any doctrine whatsoever upon the mind of any amateur. We have already discussed this fact of meditation. But it must be clear to any amateur that, while we are organizing it, we should not entertain any doctrine, devotional or philosophical. For such pre-dispositions will never give us the Buddha's system of meditation, but they may only land us into something foreign to this system.

In order to understand the nature of the trance once organized and accomplished, we should keep the process in mind, that is, in memory. It helps us to reorganize it afterwards again more quickly. We must also try to evaluate the trance in terms of its utility and facility and far-reaching effects. But these after-thoughts should be conducted, as far as possible, through vicāra. For, vitakka may make them confused with our varied pre-dispositions. It should be borne in mind that vitakka is easier to handle than vicāra; hence vicāra will give us less trouble than vitakka. Once habit is begun in this

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method of meditation, no other method will easily draw us away from this.

As quoted elsewhere above, the substance of the quotation is simply this—yoga or meditation is itself the guide of the yoga—also stated and quoted by Vyāsa in the comment of the 6th sūtra of the third part of the *Yoga-sutra*. The Buddha has also frequently emphasized two things, viz., samatha and vipassanā. Samatha means meditation or trance, while vipassanā is deliberation leading to an insight into Nibbāna. It is because what meditation will teach cannot be taught by any means whatever. Most of the writers on yoga, samādhi, meditation, and trance are of the opinion that mere study of books will never produce a trance. It is the practice of meditation only that brings about a state of trance. For, the study and knowledge of books generate and multiply vitakkas that hamper the organization of trance.

One should not keep the achievement, if any, secret or private to oneself. But one should not tell it to those who are known to hold it in. So it is a general practice observed by and among the meditationists that they tell and recommend their disciples or associates not to tell their inner experience to outsiders. But to one's friends it must be told. Such a declaration helps oneself as well as others. The Shākya Prince is not reported to have told his first trance to anybody before his Buddhahood; the result of such an unusual silence is before us; he had to undergo a severe penance for six years; maybe this omission was never afterwards repeated and, even at the last hour he said that he had not kept anything secret, no teacher's fist, to be given at his death-bed.

NOTES

[1] *A Manual of Buddhism* translated from Sinhalese MSS, by R. Spence Hardy (1853), p. 150, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, Vol. LVI, 1967.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 150, 518.

[3] *The Life of the Buddha*, W.W. Rockhill, pp. 32 and 23. See also *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* by Thomas Watters, edited, after his (T. Watter's) death, by T.W. Rhys Davids and S.W. Bushell, London

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Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. I, 1904 and Vol. II, 1905, pp. 7 and 8. *The Travels of Fa-Hsien*, retranslated by H.A. Giles, pp. 37 and 38, Cambridge University Press, 1923.

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V

The Second Trance

Suppression of Vitakka

THE EXPRESSION in the first trance, sa-vitakka sa-vicāra, implies unmistakably that vitakka is not entirely suppressed in it. The upsurge of joy in it readily helps one to take the joy up as an ābhoga and entirely leave off vitakka and vicāra. The second stage of this gradual system is therefore quite separate from that of the first one. It is natural to take to the joy so fully that vitakka and vicāra are entirely left unattended and consequently eliminated. From the accounts given in the *Lalita-vistara* and also in the *Milinda-Questions*, we learn that the Shākya Prince had organized the first, second, third, and fourth stages of the trance under the same jammu-tree in Kapilavastu's farming field.

On the other hand, the Pāli Commentaries give us only the first stage. It is improbable. The first stage only cannot be so deep and strong as to check the shade of the tree from moving away. If the shade-story was only made an excuse for preserving the then widely known tradition, the prince would naturally take to the joy overflooding his body and organize the second trance. He cannot stop at the first stage. The five Rishis, recounted in the *Lalita-vistara* and the *Mahā-vastu-avadāna*, praised the prince in trance; but he was not reported to have spoken any word of welcome or assent to them. So he was so absorbed in the Trance that he did not notice these saints praising him most significantly.

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The tradition then current must be taken in good faith in preference to the Pāli Commentary following a particular school of the Buddhist Church. We have cited several and shall bring to light many more instances of inconsistency in the Pāli Commentries.

The allurement of vitakka has been already discussed above. It cannot be suppressed and eliminated unless and until we find something more subtle to dwell upon. It is provided by vicāra. Hence the second stage of this trance is found to have been bifurcated into two stages, viz., one with vicāra, the other without vicāra. But both of them are without vitakka. Here sa-vicāra is also to be understood as discussed in the previous trance; vicāra off and on appears, though vitakka is completely suppressed in the first bifurcation, viz., a-vitakka vicāra-matta, which is tantamount to the state of a-vitakka sa-vicāra. This state of trance is however conceivable. For, when one has done away with mental speaking and is not drawn towards reviving it again for meditation, one may have sustained the concept previously generated by the eliminated vitakka. The concept will however gradually subside and joy and pleasure will be felt fully. But vicāra may appear off and on in this first state, a-vitakka vicāra-matta trance.

The Prince, however, organized the second trance of the second bifurcation or rather the original second trance, in which both vitakka and vicāra were suppressed and eliminated. Hence we have the four trances, not five trances, of the gradual type of trance on the form plane (rūpāvacara). This bifurcation has also brought about three kinds of samādhi, called sa-vitakka sa-vicāra, a-vitakka vicāra-matta, a-vitakka a-vicāra. These three kinds of samādhi are seemingly further divided into four kinds, by separating vitakka from vicāra, in the first part of the *Yoga-sūtra* and its commentary and sub-commentaries. Thus we have therein the following categories and their significance.

Four Kinds in Yoga-Sutra

In the 41st sūtra of the first part, or samādhi-pāda, of the *Yoga-ūtr*a, Sage Patañjali defines 'samāpatti' as crystal-clear-mindedness in contact with any object or subject. It is classified into four kinds, viz., sa-vitarka, nir-vitarka, sa-vicāra, and nir-

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vicāra in the following or subsequent six sūtras. These four categories can be understood, with certain reservations, in the context above, as sa-vitakka, a-vitakka, sa-vicāra, and a-vicāra. Sa-vicāra may be replaced by vicāra-matta as above.

The term 'sa-vitarka' is tersely defined, in the 42nd sūtra, as a notion mixed with the verbal name of an object, the object itself, and knowledge of the two. Although these three items are different from each other, any one of them is mixed up with the rest in general parlance. In the contemplation of samāpatti nature, the first stage, sa-vitarka, may be disturbed by such a mixed notion, off and on. According to the 43rd sūtra, the second stage, nir-vitarka, is attained when the object only is comprehended without any notion of knowing or comprehending the object. This state is due to the purification of the mind from the memory of word-symbols previously learnt, heard, or inferred.

Similarly, the third stage, sa-vicāra, is attained, as given in the 44th sūtra, and as commented upon by Vyāsa and sub-commented upon by Miśra, Bhikṣu, Bhojarāja, Hariharānanda and others, when one contemplates upon subtle elements capable of being manifest in one's own direct and current experience. The subtle object or subject of this meditation is therefore determined by limiting space, present or current time, and causation. This should be of direct experience, not learnt, heard, or inferred; as in the first stage, sa-vitarka, this third stage also is disturbed by a mixed notion. Bhikṣu among the sub-commentators, says, in his Vārtika at p. 121, a remarkable thing.

Explaining the concluding portion of Vyāsa's commentary on the above 44th sūtra, Bhikṣu expresses the opinion that what applies to the nir-vitarka samapatti as regards the avoidance (hāni) of notion (vikalpa) mixed with words, object, and their comprehension, is equally applicable to both the sa-vicāra and nir-vicāra samāpattis as well. He further says that the author of the sūtra has almost joined this sūtra to the preceding one, in which the nir-vitarka is said to be void of the said notion. For, he says: "The notion (vikalpa) left off in the previous field (that is, nir-vitarka) cannot be in the later field (that is, sa-vicāra)." In consonance with the 17th sūtra of this very Samādhi-pāda, wherein the samprajñāta samādhi leaves off one after

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another of the four constituents, viz., vitarka, vicāra, ānanda, and asmitā, as it rises higher and higher in samādhi, Bhikṣu's assertion seems to be quite logical and good.

Corresponding to the Buddhist classification of the above-mentioned three types of samādhis, viz., sa-vitakka sa-vicāra, a-vitakka vicāra-matta, and a-vitakka-a-vicāra, Bhikṣu's improvement on sa-vicāra samāpatti would be understandable. Prof. James Haughton Woods[1] has expressed another opinion on this point. In his work *The Yoga System of Patanjali*, he writes, in a footnote at p. 89, referring to the concluding portion of Vyāsa's commentary on this 44th sūtra: "The two kinds must be the super-deliberative and the super-reflective; and not as Vijñāna Bhikṣu says, the reflective and super-reflective. This would be a gross inconsistency. For the reflective kind has predicate relations." It may be added here that the reason given by Bhikṣu is plausibly consistent. Accordingly, the footnote, on this very point added by Dāmodara-Shāstri, the editor of the Sanskrit book named *Sānga-Yoga-Darśanam*, and given on p. 121, contradicts the remark made against Bhikṣu, as follows: "What is told, by someone, on the meaning...rendered by Bhikṣu, as inconsistency is. . . heyam" (to be disregarded.)

Now to resume the topic of samādhi, the last or fourth kind is nir-vicāra samāpatti. This samāpatti is free from the limitations of what has been said above of sa-vicāra samāpatti. Hence it is unlimited and not cut off, in any way and from any side, by spatial, temporal, and causal experience, that is, by preceding arising, and indeterminately succeeding mental phenomena. But we should bear in mind that the Yoga philosophy regards the mind (citta) as one and the same persisting throughout its various modifications, as is evident from the commentary on the 32nd sūtra of the Samādhi-pāda. On the contrary, Buddhist psychology regards the mind as momentary, as mentioned elsewhere above.

The need for comparing with other systems will be apparent in the above description. It shows that the fundamental process of organizing meditation is not different in meditative systems. The difference lies in evaluating achievement in the light of their respective doctrines and targets. The Shākya Prince's

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system is, as we have seen, free from any doctrine and philosophical obsession from the very beginning. The conception of Nibbāna itself, as we shall see in the fourth phase of this research, is not a doctrine in itself, but the logical culmination of his meditative system.

Suppression of Vicāra

Our habit of thinking is generally dependent on language; we form even concepts by means of words; abstract thoughts are often made up of complicated terms. Hence vicāra becomes helpless when vitakka is suppressed. The practice of meditating, without directing the mind outwards towards any external object, or inwards to an internal concept or even to an abstract thought, easily and naturally suppresses vitakka and thereby vicāra as well. In the gradual type of meditation, we are neither drawn towards any object nor subject for concentrating our senses or inner faculties on. Nevertheless we are meditating in a calmer and deeper state of mind. Accordingly, the Prince must have suppressed and then eliminated both vitakka and vicāra, without recourse to the abovementioned category of a-vitakka vicāra-matta samādhi.

When these two habitually most active mental factors are eliminated, then an intense liking within oneself to meditation, appears; the mind become fully collected and flows uninterruptedly; then, without vitakka, without vicāra, joy and pleasure born of samādhi becomes manifest; it is the second trance (jhāna). It is not an an extension or enlargement of the first trance; it is as separated from the first trance, as the first trance is from ordinary meditation on the material plane (kāmāvacara); although the first trance is organized on the form plane (rūpāvacara) and so also the second one, the quality and nature of the second is not the same as that of the first.

It should be well understood that Buddhist psychology does not support the theory that a trance overlaps another trance of a different quality or category. It is tantamount to saying that a trance cannot go on developing, during the same single train of meditating or sitting in that trance, to higher and higher kinds of trance. For a trance has to be organized; it does not come by itself; it is an active process of mind; a passive mood

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cannot produce a trance of this kind. Hence each step and state of trance will have to be organized and maintained by one's own active meditation.

The theory of overlapping trances was held by two Buddhist schools, such as Mahisāsaka and certain Andhakas. They thought that the gradual teaching of four successive Jhānas was also continuous, overlapping the first with the second, the second, with the third, and the third with the fourth. This is discussed in the *Jhanā-saṅkanti-kathā*, the sixth kathā of the 18th vagga in the Pāli *Kathā-vatthu*, the Book of Controversy. The commentary gives the name of the two schools and their mistake in holding such a view. The view is refuted in a manner characteristic of the *Kathā-vatthu*. The amateur should not be confused by the word 'Saṅkanti' or overlapping; it is a psychological term of subtle meaning; there is no objection, if the amateur organizes the first trance and the second and the third and the fourth in the same sitting posture and during the same period of time. He is only to bear in mind that the first trance will not, by itself, reach the second stage; he will have to organize each stage through an active mind. Even if he thinks that the first stage rises to the second, he will not be far from the truth; for the gap between the two stages might be, by advanced practice, so small that it may escape his attention.

To all appearances, the Shākya Prince organized and dwelt in the successive trances from the first to the fourth stage without minding the little gaps in between. In practice also, we are not mindful of the little gaps intervening in our ordinary thinking and contemplation. This is in keeping with the mind moving from moment to moment in one series or another. Even if we be under the notion that the mind is one, the changing mind would pass through different states and formations with intervening gaps between them. For the same reason the viewpoint on the mind held in the *Yoga-sūtra* and its commentary does not make any substantial difference in the organizing of trances from that of the Buddhist system.

It is to be remembered that this second trance becomes the third of the five due to the bifurcation this trance undergoes as discussed above. And also it becomes the third or the last kind

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of the three types of samādhi mentioned under the section "Suppression of Vitakka".

NOTE

[1]*The Yoga System of Patanjali* or the Ancient Hindu Doctrine of Concentration of Mind. Translated from the original Sanskrit by James Haughton Woods, Professor of Philosophy in Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Harvard University Press, Second Edition, September, 1927. Harvard Oriental Series, Edited with the cooperation of various scholars by Charles Rockwell Lanman, Volume Seventeen, p. 89, fn. 2.

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VI

The Third Trance

Detachment from Piti

PITI OR joy, when it appears and overfloods the mind, sometimes becomes uncontrollable. When the mind makes it an ābhoga, the mind becomes buoyant and its balance therefore is disturbed. In our system of meditation, we are recommended not to make an ābhoga of any object, subject, or state, inasmuch as we are heading towards a unique trance organized by Siddhārtha and Bodhisattva and Buddha. It is therefore clear that the Shākya Prince could easily detach himself from the overpowering buoyancy of piti. For a time we get overjoyed in meditation: but the joy begins to subside, when we try to balance ourselves in spite of the joy. It seems, the joy springs from undifferentiated sentiment; otherwise there is no reason why it should surge up when the best of our mental faculties such as the intellect gets suppressed.

When the unaccountable upsurge of joy is detached, one becomes stabilized in equanimity (upekkhako); one is constantly mindful; one is also aware of least movement; though the joy has subsided and been detached, the bodily pleasure is experienced. The Ariyas describe the one as "Upekkhako satimā sukha-vihāri" or, in other words, the Noble Ones call the organizer of and dweller in this trance, as one stabilized in equanimity, mindfulness, and pleasurable experience. It is the third trance. It is organized on the form plane (rūpāvacara), as

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the first and the second trances are done, but the quality and nature are not the same.

This trance contains a specific sentence, "To that which the Ariyas call..."Upekkhako Satimā Sukha-vihāri", as explained above. Who are these Ariyas? Buddhaghoṣa says, in the commentaries such as *Aṭṭha-sālini*, and in his work *Visuddhi-magga*, that the Ariyas mean Buddha, etc. The sentence is found in the works of mixed Sanskrit also in connection with this third trance. The same sense is expressed in the *Vimutti-magga*. No satisfactory explanation is given for such an insertion. But it is decidedly an old tradition so much so that its real significance has been lost. One explanation can however be suggested from three out of four Brahma-vihāras or immeasurables. These three immeasurable types of meditation, such as friendliness, compassion, and delightfulness, or metta karuṇā and muditā, terminate in this third stage. Hence this specific state would have been called so, because the three Brahma-vihāras were widely practised even before the advent of our Shākya Muni. But this stage could not have been organized from the first stage, as naturally and gradually as the Shākya Prince had done.

The analogy in the above thesis may be found in the Kuṇḍalini system of meditation. Although the natural process is said to arouse the basic subtle power known as Kuṇḍalini or serpent power at first, and then to move it successively through the lower subtle plexuses to the higher ones, many types of yoga teach to concentrate on one of the imagined higher centres (cakras) without any regard to a gradual and systematic process. The result is as it should presumably be. The Kuṇḍalini is not fully aroused and channellized; the plexuses are not opened one by one; the mystic forms are not fully and clearly visualized; the voidness of the third ventricle in the brain is not realised; the climax scene is seldom seen and the mystic voice therein is scarcely heard... so appears to be the general complaint.

Similarly, the traditional Brahma-vihāras might have been practised in an isolated manner independently of the gradual trances discovered by the Shākya Prince, Siddhārtha. The first three are generally said to terminate of course at the stage of the third trance; they would then have little advantage of utilizing

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it to attain the fourth stage and, through the regular four illimitables, to the cessation of feeling and consciousness.

Brahma-Vihara

Meditation on immeasurables, that is, Brahma-vihāra, seems to have been practised even long before the Shākya Muni. After the discovery of the gradual system of trances by the Shākya Prince and its later development, the immeasurable type of meditation was also joined to the gradual system, as is evident from the description of the "Brahma-vihāra" in the 5th section of the second chapter "Rūpāvacara" in the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka; and so is the 13th chapter "Appamaññā Vibhaṅga" in the second book "Pāli Vibhaṅga" of the same *Piṭaka*. In the above section and chapter, respectively, this type of immeasurable meditation is described after the treatment of the gradual one, viz., the four trances.

The gradual type of meditation is the basis or foundation of other kinds and types of meditation. For the former leads to the organization of the latter. So the treatment of the latter must come after the former. Accordingly, the gradual type of meditation is being dealt with under the above short headings, as clearly, comprehensively, and practically as the subject under research demanded and allowed.

Kasina Type

This type of meditation, with the help of a little sample design of physical elements and colours, seems to have been introduced in order to facilitate the recognition of the 'form' sign or concept, as explained above. The method advocated above is however to obtain the sign of a pattern of what is presented before us without intently looking at the physical scene of the pattern in front of us. And the pattern thus seen would gradually separate itself from the material concept of the things constituting the scene, and would, after some time, appear as a mere form in space. The form is the rūpāvacara.

In the kasiṇa method, the little sample design of, say, the earth, is intently or actively looked at by the novice. He is taught to look at it; he must well memorise the visual sign of the little sample design called 'paṭhavi kasiṇa'; he is to be able

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to see it with his eyes closed as clearly as he sees it with his eyes open; this is the after-image of the sample design; then he is to come back to his room and to remember the after-image, so long as it is converted into a counterpart image. The counterpart image thus produced is evidently a vivid mental concept of a form-like nature. A novice could be easily told to recognise it as a form. Then the first trance would be expected to arise gradually therefrom. This is apparently what was, not unreasonably, easier to be told as such to a novice by his expert preceptor. But any educated modern amateur would soon give it up when he fails to remember the kasiṇa vividly, not to speak of waiting for the counterpart sign to arise.

From the chapter on "Jhāna-Vibhaṅgo", the 12th one of the second book of the *Abhidhamma*, we find no mention of paṭhavi kasiṇa in the description of the four gradual trances (jhānas) under the first section "Suttanta Bhājaniyam" or division according to suttas. It is only in the second section "Adhidhamma Bhājaniyam" or division according to the *Abhidhamma*, that we find the words paṭhavi kasiṇa with the four jhānas. Accordingly we cannot find the little sample design of the earth, etc. appended to the four jhanas. In the last sutta of the *Dīgha Nikāya* named "Dasuttara Suttam", or One to Ten itemized dhammas; we read, in the nine-item section, the four jhānas as usual elsewhere without any mention of the paṭhavi kasiṇa. In the ten-item section, however, there is a paragraph; ten kasiṇa-āyatanāni are given herein; but the kasiṇa is not as the little sample design of physical elements and colours; it is extensive upward, downward, side-long, without an equal, and measureless. So far as the earth kasiṇa among the ten kasiṇas is concerned, it is presumably similar to the 'paṭhavi-saññā' mentioned in the 21st sutta of the third part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, "Cūla-suññatā-sutta", or a smaller discourse on desertedness; the smaller one is so called in comparison to the next Mahā-suññatā-sutta. Herein also the concept of the extensive plain deserted earth is taken for meditative consciousness. The commentary on this sutta however tells us that the well practised paṭhavi kasiṇa is necessary before organizing this paṭhavi-saññā. It is probably due to the need to conform to the tradition of the Southern School.

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The relevant portions of the four trances do not contain such words as paṭhavi kasiṇa in the mixed Sanskrit works such as *Mahā-vastu-avadāna*, *Lalita-vistara*, the Third Chapter of *Daśa-Bhūmika-Sūtram*, etc.

This kasiṇa practice may be useful for cultivating the super-normal powers by means of its enlargement or development after the counterpart sign has been obtained. Hence the discussion of this subject can only be appropriately and usefully resumed in and from the third phase of this research later on.

Impediments to Trance

The general five impediments to the first trance have already been described briefly in the second paragraph under the sub-heading of "Rūpāvacara" above. They were given in substance only without quoting the terms in Pāli. In meditation, it is generally felt that we should be encouraged to create an active interest in it. The enumeration of impediments may, instead of helping us, discourage us, more or less. In fact, a negative attitude does not produce a single meditation; for, there may be more inhibitions than we can learn about, much less know them, when they might arise in the mind. Once the trance is obtained, the impediment becomes clear enough to us, although much less clear than it did to the Shākya Prince.

Other Meditations

There are other contrivances of meditation. One of the most important ones is the meditation on respiration or Ānāpāna Sati; this we might discuss in a full chapter; it would be too long at this stage of our phase; it could be joined to the preliminary of the trance in order to prevent the mind from wandering. But such a treatment would not meet our purpose. Hence, with much reluctance, we shall have to keep it to be introdúced in later phases.

The famous four observations or meditations on the body, feeling, mind, and the phenomena are also too long to be added hereto. The ten a-subha bhāvanās are primarily meant to generate an insight into the nature of liberation. So this would not probably be palatable to an amateur at this stage. Similar is the case with the two meditations on food and four elements. Of

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the memories, meditation on the attributes of the various deities, once human beings like ourselves, might have been very interesting at least; but the length discourages the treatment here. So we shall see them in later phases.

Buddhist Psychology

A little insight into the process of meditative psychology would be very interesting. For this general understanding of Buddhist psychology would become necessary. But the latter is mixed up with very intricate Buddhist philosophy so much so that it would disturb the mind of an amateur more than it would held him. Therefore only a short and relevant feature from it will be given here. More than this may be taken up in the later phases.

The mind is not active always in our waking hours. As we get tired after long exercise of our body and seek rest, our mind is also liable to be fatigued. Like the body, the mind remains passive in between our activities, during rest, and throughout dreamless sleep. Although we are not discussing the problem of births and lives other than the present one, we have to think of the first moment of our foetal life. It is because we have to start from that moment in order to understand the passive mind. The first moment is termed paṭisandhi or the settlement of consciousness (viññaṇa) in the foetus. In other words, it is the beginning of the present life we are leading. From that point the passive mind started, is flowing ahead, and may come up ultimately to a moment we call the last moment of our present life (cuti).

Bhavanga

The passive mind flowing from the start to the last point of our present existence is named Bhavaṅga or the main factor or organ of our existence. Such a flow of mental movements might have run the full course of, say, a hundred and twenty years, our full life-span, undisturbed by our wakeful and dreaming phenomena, were it not for the fact that we try to break this flow by our mental activities. These activities include all the mental phenomena and are called by a single name, Vīthi-citta, or the process of

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mental cognition, conation, imagination, thinking, contemplating, meditating, etc.

From the Buddhist ethical view-point, this Bhavaṅga is a resultant of our past actions good or bad. As such, it may produce appropriate fruits, good or bad, favourable or unfavourable, pleasant or unpleasant, etc. But it cannot move us towards any action that can bear fruit in future. The past actions of each one of us are and should be varied and different from the rest of us. Hence the Bhavaṅga must be also varied and different from one another. The Bhavaṅga is a flow of passive moments like those of dreamless sleep, so to say. It is an inert current least desirable for any active development. So this passive mind cannot be brilliant by nature, as was discussed by us before, under the sub-heading of "Nature of the Mind", though interpreted otherwise by an authority like Buddhaghoṣa and also Vyāsa. The billiant phenomena of the mind can be only experienced in a trance.

Nidra

Bhavaṅga, as a state of dreamless sleep, cannot be or remain the same even in oneself or others. Commenting on the 10th sūtra of the *Yoga-sūtra* in its first part, Samādhi-pāda, the Commentator Vyāsa writes: "Since it is remembered when awakened, 'sleep' (*Nidrā*) is a particular fluctuation of the mind. How is it so? It is thus—'Pleasantly I slept, buoyant is my mind, it clarifies my intellect. Miserably I slept, inert is my mind, confused and unsteady. Heavily dull I slept, heavy are my physical organs and members, fatigued is my mind in laziness, like stolen away by someone it feels.' This memory of an awakened one should not have been remembered, unless the mental fluctuation was experienced... Hence this passive mind must be as varied as there are individuals with different dispositions; it cannot also be the same on different occasions with the same person. In short, such a mental state cannot be bright by nature, as interpreted by our commentators.

Process of Cognition

When a stimulus comes into contact with any organ of sense,

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say, the eyes, the flow of the passive mind is disturbed. This disturbance causes the primary mind (mana, hṛdaya, or the heart) to advert or turn to the eyes which simultaneously sense the visible quality of the stimulus or object; this is the eye-consciousness; the latter is received again by the primary mind and automatically passed on to mind-consciousness (mano-viññāṇa) to be determined by it after investigation.

To evaluate the factors and faculties engaged herein, this is a brief summary: the stimulus is material; the turning of the primary mind is only operational (kiriyā), and so is the determining by the mind. The eye-consciousness, the reception by the primary mind, the passing on to the mind for investigation, are, respectively termed, cakkhu-viññāṇa, sampaṭicchana, santīraṇa; the last of these three, 'santīraṇa', has an investigating function like that of vicāra, but in order to shorten the steps, I passed on to the next important aspect of determining (voṭṭhapana). Those three functions are each a resultant (vipāka), while the turning (āvajjana) of the primary mind and the determining (voṭṭhapana) by the mind consciousness are only operational (kiriyā). In effect, they are all unconcerned with any ethnical outcome; they are, so to say, innocent so far.

Javana

The process of cognition does not stop often with the determination of the object; it further moves on with our active interest, motive, and volition for the duration of the mental moments taken up by all the previous functions together, that is, seven mental moments. This movement is termed "javana", or impulsion. This duration is full of responsibility and consequences. One does not remain innocent here; one will do something good or bad by any of the means at one's disposal; this is the active mind in effect.

Even in the purely mental phenomena for one's stimulus, the mind, adverting or turning to that mental object, comes directly to this javana stage and runs for seven mental moments as in the sensual objects. It may seem dogmatic to take javana in such a context; but we shall have to assign a sort of responsibility to any state of mind. One should not or cannot let oneself will whatever one likes. Hence the Shākya Prince

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differentiated thoughts or vitakkas into two categories as mentioned above. This must be a guide for us too.

Appanā

Meditative psychology implies adverting to the mental object as the stimulus and the javana after it. The javana in this case is termed 'appanā', or transference to trance. There are four or five steps of mental organization to appanā. The terms are parikamma, upacāra, anuloma, gotra-bhu, and the last, appanā. They mean, respectively, preparation, accession, inclination upward, overpowering the material plane just before appanā, and trance. These terms, however, are not necessary for organizing a trance; they are in reality passed or crossed over by an amateur or savant without knowing their names and definitions. In an actual trance these first four names are mere four moments of the javana viññāṇa just before one's entrance (appanā) into a trance. It is said that a first entrant or a beginner gets appanā at the fifth moment of the seven moments of javana. Afterwards there is no such limitation to appanā or trance.

The flow of appanā moments moves on in a mental stream, displacing the flow of bhavaṅga or the passive mind, for longer and longer periods, depending on one's practice and liking for it. An amateur should not got bewildered by words like flow, moments, etc. Such words are used to describe the actual mental analysis. For an amateur, however, meditation and its culmination in trance are the main concerns. All niceties of words and expressions are foreign to the real practicer. Some of our medieval Siddhas were famous for non-methodical words, and expressions, but their deep trances were and even now are as good as unachievable by our modern savants. For, meditation is its own teacher; no book on meditation can replace it.

Tadarammana

To resume our discussion, after the javana has run for seven mental moments on sensuous or mental objects of reference, it is said, the objects or subjects may resist obliteration before this course of mental moments, numbering 15 and 11, respectively, is run. Now for a full course two more moments are yet left; these two mental moments become the registering and, at the

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same time resultant ones called "tadārammaṇa", fully influenced by the moral or immoral contents of the mind at the end of the javana or impulsion. This is a (present) resultant. This may be similar or dissimilar to the nature of the bhavaṅga, or the passive mental flow (or the accumulation of all the resultants). It mixes with the bhavaṅga. So it must change, to some extent, however small, the content of the (extant) bhavaṅga. Thus it can be easily imagined that the flow of the passive mind accumulates the incoming registering resultants (tadārammaṇa) produced by the javana or mental impulsion in its course throughout our life-span.

It is inducive to optimism. It is also an emphatic challenge to our moral duty, conduct, and thinking. We cannot let the original flow of the passive mind retain its original quality unchanged giving birth to pessimism. Our moral attempt can go on changing it and thus generating optimism. This may seem dogmatism, but we shall have anyhow to find a means to escape from pessimism and to head towards optimism.

The trance is a stream of uninterrupted appanā moments, displacing the flow of bhavaṅga moments. Appanā is a kind of excellent javana; javana can run its maximum course of seven mental moments only; but appanā is an active conscious meditative moment and can continue moving on for longer periods of time; moreover, appanā is volitional as javana, whereas a resultant or a registering resultant (tadārammaṇa) is non-volitional and passive. Hence appanā or trance has no tadārammaṇa.

After tadārammaṇa, the mind comes down again to bhavaṅga, or the passive state of the mind. After appanā also, the meditative mind is awakened in the material world and runs the usual course of the active and passive mind as the circumstances obtain.

Ekaggata

In the usual description of the four trances, there is no such word or phrase as 'cittassa ekaggatā' or mental concentration. But the 12th chapter "Jhāna-Vibhaṅga" of the second book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* explains the word jhāna adding the phrase to the end; therefore all these four jhānas are each given

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the phrase, cittassa ekaggatā, as one of the constituents of the trance. It is to define the trance more explicitly that the phrase is invariably used. This concentration is however implied in any trance whatsoever. Hence the reader should take the phrase into consideration wherever trance is mentioned or described. It does not however mean one-pointedness; it is mental concentration or collectedness.

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VII

The Fourth Trance

THE AMATEUR may feel uneasy in the mind at the mention of the last or fourth trance. It is not because of the trance, but the numerical order of the fourth that he may do so. From a practical point of view the first trance is more difficult to organize than the successive ones. To give an idea of the volume of their respective treatment by early savants, I would like to present their works in the space devoted to these trances. In the Pāli *Visuddhi-magga*, Buddhaghoṣa in its fourth chapter Paṭhavi-Kasiṇa deals with the subject of the first trance in paragraphs numbered 1 to 139. The second trance is treated of in 12 paragraphs after this. The third trance takes a length of 29 paragraphs The fourth trance occupies only 17 paragraphs. In the Aṭṭha-sālinī Commentary, he deals with these trances and their salient features only, in sections covering 15, 6, 12, 8 paragraphs, respectively. In the English version or the translation of the *Vimutti-magga*, its author fills up 25, 4, 4, 4 pages, respectively. In the 12th chapter of the second book of the *Abhidhamma*, the terms of these four Jhānas are exegetically stated from 20th to 99th sections.

In the Sutta Piṭaka, they are often exemplified or elucidated by various similes. They are taught or explained to disciples or others or even opponents. Hence it is seldom easy to comprehend

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the real method and support of the teaching for one's own application. What we have done so far was to follow in the footsteps of the Shākya Prince when he organized them without any previous knowledge of all these exigencies and erudition. But it should not be thought that the later exegetical and commentatorial expositions have made the subject much easier or less difficult than the original version. It is evident in the commentary itself, where we find many instances or stories in which an expert monk or teacher advises a learned monk well-versed in texts and commentaries to shut them up and follow his commonplace practice of meditation.

Hence an amateur, who has understood the Buddha's method of meditation, especially the first one he discovered under the jambu tree in or near Kapilavastu, should never be discouraged by the profusion of requirements demanded by these works that have to conform to their specific tenets and rules of conduct. I must encourage amateurs here, though with much reluctance, that one acquires the best of merits, at least during the time one is in trance, according to the very authority of the Canon and its Commentary. For, one cannot attain the trance without the best of moral roots, and hence, if an amateur attains it, he must be with the best roots at the time. The Buddha once propounded, when he was residing in Sāvatthi, a sutta called "Bhaddekaratta" literally, engaged in one excellent thing only. This sutta was also repeated before a congregation of monks by Monk Ānanda; it was confirmed later by the Buddha; two other monks were informed by some supernatural beings of this sutta and persuaded by them to learn it thoroughly. They did so later from the Buddha as well as from the famous Mahākaccāna.

The main significance of the above sutta is its emphasis on the present and this currently present only. These suttas are found in the third part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, suttas numbering 31 to 34 of the Upari (last)-Paṇṇāsaka. The commentary on these discourses, however, mixes it up with doctrinal insight. This sutta must be our sure guide free from all doctrinal obsession, adherence, and dependence. Only meditation can give us this attitude, courage, freedom and stability.

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Recognition

In meditation, it is always of paramount importance to recognize the state or the stage of meditation or trance. For, it penetrates the intellect when it is recognized. What is called insight is this recognition that penetrates the very intellect. The recognition of meditation or trance helps to recall it later. It comes, not from books, but from one's own alertness or mindfulness. It is necessarily difficult to recall, as everyone knows; but it is never hard to recognize the mental state as it settles down. The recognition of the state of the mind in trance also helps us to maintain the alertness of the mind and abstain from making an ābhoga of the mental state obtaining in the trances one after another. This abstention from the ābhoga enables our mind to rise higher and higher in trance. This idea is contained in the precept called "Kullūpama" or the simile of a floating bundle of wood, sticks, branches, and straw or a floating raft, given by the Buddha. This precept is in the 4th section of the sutta named Alagaddūpama, the 22nd sutta of the first part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The substance of this precept is that the Buddha has propounded his dhammas for getting across over them, and not to hold on to them fast. As a raft is left near the stream or lake after crossing over, so the dhammas are to be left off after the purpose is fulfilled.

The Gradual Process

The pattern of, say, visible objects presented to our eyes assumes a form (Rūpāvacara), when the former gradually separates itself from its physical concept, as explained fully in the preceding sections. The form becomes clearer, lighter, and brighter than the physical objects upon which the form arose. The frequent vitakka and vicāra make meditation material (kāmāvacara) or physical ābhoga. When both of these two mental fluctuations become rare, the first of the Four Trances on the form plane (Rūpāvacara) manifests itself. It consists of joy and pleasure born of seclusion. It has also mental concentration or collectedness. In the Buddha's meditative system there is no object or subject, outside or inside, external or internal, made fixed for the one-pointedness of the mind. It is in effect a

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unique mentality imperceptibly oriented to the incomprehensible Nibbāna.

Only such a mind can be properly said to be brilliant (pabhassara) by nature. In practical experience, any prolonged and deep meditation, when it settles down in a sort of samādhi, exhibits a phenomenon of light. In Buddhist meditative psychology, it is said that this sort of mental light can be expanded and channelled in what is known as supernormal powers. All, or almost all, oriental systems of meditation teach the practicer to transcend such light and take such powers as a hindrance to higher targets of spiritual attainment.

To resume our discourse, mental speaking is what mainly obscures a state of trance. It is a vitakka. Once it is suppressed and eliminated by means of neglecting or ignoring it, the conceiving of objects through vicāra becomes difficult. So vicāra also slowly subsides. Vicāra gets eliminated only by a sort of ābhoga of the joy and pleasure born of samādhi, as explained earlier. It is the second trance.

The third trance has been already fully dealt with above. It was said before that overflooding joy easily passes off, when one observes its unsteadiness and feels one's balance disturbed due to its upsurge. It is not unnatural. The pleasure is felt calmer and steadier than the joy, and consequently the former displaces the latter. It was also suggested that this trance, as an isolated practice in the immeasurable contemplation called Brahma vihāra, might have been current long before the time of our Shākya Prince. For, otherwise the mention of Ariyas or Noble Ones could not have been invariably made in this third trance, without any satisfactory explanation thereof given anywhere.

It is of course very difficult to transcend the third stage and attain the fourth stage. For, the ābhoga of well-balanced pleasure permeating the body in meditation stays co-existent with the body. It should be understood that the body in meditation does not seem, or at least is not felt, as a body with material properties, such as hardness, heaviness, coarseness, etc. The body is felt surprisingly as a non-physical one; for the trance makes the body light and soft and formal. So technically it is called nāmakāya or immaterial body. This will need a little elucidation.

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When the mind is slowly becoming transformed into a state of trance, the body also follows imperceptibly the mental lightness, so to say. The body feels heavy when we walk about; but in a sitting meditative posture, we begin to loosen the physical conception of its properties and thus to feel it along with the mental state. Moreover the Buddha is reported to have taught that our active thinking is required to take or know the thing as we do ordinarily. According to Buddhist psychology also, the automatic process of cognition is reinforced only in the javana or impulsion moments; and in the state of trance the javana moments are changed into the flow of appanā moments. Hence we have practically no time, during the trance, to dwell sufficiently on the body as a physical constituent.

Elimination of Pleasure

It is difficult to differentiate the pleasure born of samādhi from its ābhoga; the two separate mental concomitants mingle with each other; but our original disposition of remaining aloof from an internal and external fixation may help us to transcend this pleasurable state. So it is no wonder that the oriental philosophers generally start their thesis from sorrows or sufferings. In Buddhism also, we have to admit that non-attachment is regarded as of paramount importance. Nevertheless, our inquisitiveness may lead us forward towards the successful organization of the Fourth Trance. We are not after all staying in trances lower or less subtle than the Fourth Trance; for we want ultimately to experience the highest trance known as the cessation of consciousness and feeling or, in other words, Nibbāna.

The short description of this Fourth Trance is given in identical terms in Pāli and Mixed Sanskrit; but no explanation is added thereto. Canonical explanation is found in the 12th chapter entitled Jhāna-vibhaṅgo of the second book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* in the exegetical technique. This short list of equivalent words is however very important, specially when Buddhaghoṣa leaves the pivotal words "pahānā" unexplained, and the sub-commentator Dhammapāla also rather passes over it in the *Mahā-ṭīkā*. Seen from the short list of meanings given in the Jhāna-Vibhaṅga, the English translation of this word as 'abandoning'[1] in paragraph 183 of the 4th chapter (p. 171) of the

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Path of Purification is, with my apology, decidedly unfitting in the context. The work, as referred to above also, is a translation of the *Visuddh-imagga* by Rev. Nāṇamoli of Sri Lanka. Similarly is the phrase "abandoning pleasure and abandoning pain" so far as the word "abandoning" is concerned; the phrase is given in the context of the Four Trances at the end of p. 66 of the *Life of Buddha* by the learned author Edward J. Thomas.

The meaning of this word given in the above Jhāna-vibhaṅga is doubtlessly clear and useful. It says: "santā, vūpa-santā, atthaṅgatā, abbhatthaṅgatā, appitā, byappitā, sositā, visositā, byanāti-katā". It means calmed, quietened becalmed, disappeared, vanished, etc. Our problem is also hereby solved; for bodily pleasure and pain cannot be abandoned at will and the former (pleasure) is not conditioned by repetition (āsevana paccaya), for the neutral feeling, according to Buddhaghoṣa and corroborated in the Vedana-ttika of the first volume of the Paṭṭhāna of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. He says that, in this Jhāna, non-painful and non-easurable feeling has to be produced and this feeling is accompanied by upekkhā vedanā, wherewith the joy (pīti) gets decreased. But what about the suppression of pleasure (sukha)? He has no answer to it. In the description of the Fourth Trance in the 4th chapter of his work, *Visuddhi-magga*, Buddhaghoṣa gives a simile of the contrivance of catching hold of an unruly bull. In order to do so, one has to drive all the cattle into the pen or enclosure at first and then to catch the bull. Therefore the Buddha collected herein all these feelings for easy understanding. He further says: "This non-pain non-pleasure is here non-painful non-pleasurable feeling; it is subtle and difficult to know, and it is not easily comprehensible." For this reason Buddhaghoṣa provided the above simile.

The *Vimutti-magga* has nothing to enlighten us on the problem. The original Pāli or mixed Prākrit text of this work is not available. What we have is the English translation of the Chinese version of the original work. On the important points such as we are confronted with here, such books are not helpful. We do not know what the original author had to say definitely about such intricate points. It is concerned with meditation and with the transcending of its different states, for which such books can guide us little. They may be of historical interest and value but, as a

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guide, they should be left alone. None can learn anything of meditative value or undertake a systematic practice depending on such books. Nevertheless this book, even in its English version, provides an undeniable authenticity to Buddhaghoṣa's work, the *Visuddhi-magga*.

The commentary on the first book of the *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka* on the subject has the same explanation as given in the *Visuddhi-magga*. The *Adhidhamma-Kosa* in Sanskrit has nothing more to say on this question in its relevant 8th chapter; the *Abhidhamma ṭthasaṅgaha* in Pāli also dwells on it. Similarly, Rev. Robert Spence Hardy from the Singhalese sources in his work *A Manual of Buddhism* does not add anything more on the topic. So is *The Life of the Buddha* derived from the Tibetan works and translated by W. Woodville Rockhill, on the point under discussion. The usual oriental mood of discerning sorrow and suffering in everything presumably smacks of pessimism to occidental temperaments. And this very contrivance to transcend the pleasure is found in Buddhist commentaries and also in Vyāsa's commentary on the 12th and 18th sūtras. But the Shākya Prince does not seem to have been in such a mood, when he attained the fourth stage of trance transcending the third, as is evident from the optimistic praises uttered by the five saints, according to the accounts given in the *Lalita-vistara* and the *Mahā-vastu-avadāna*. There is definite mention of Lakṣmi, or the goddess of fortune, and the optimistic prediction by them. This is "Ayam tam prāpsyate dharmam yaj jagad hlādayiṣyati" in both the works, meaning—'this (prince) will obtain that dharma, that will delight the world.'

Aphorism or Formula

'Due to the vanishing of pleasure, and due to the vanishing of pain, and because of mental elation and dejection already having disappeared, one organizes the fourth trance, that is the mindfulness fully purified by this equanimity (upekkhā), which is neither mentally pleasant nor mentally unpleasant.' This is our version of the formula.

The above meaning is derived from and given according to the explanation of the formula dealt with in the Jhāna-vibhaṅga

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of the second book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. But Buddhaghoṣa has added a fresh idea to this. He says, in both the commentaries, that the phrase "a-dukkham a-sukham", or non-pain non-pleasure, indicates a third kind of feeling (vedanā) opposed to pain and pleasure, and not merely the absence of pain and pleasure. It is also canonically true; for there are generally three kinds of feeling, viz., painful, pleasurable, and absence of the two. It is also termed "upekkhā", virtually meaning equanimity. Hence it is a unique feeling which fully purifies mindfulness (sati). This is basic to almost all the higher trances.

Formulas of Four Trances

The first description of these four trances organized and dwelt in by Sarvārtha-Siddha, Siddhārtha or Shākya Prince is given in full in the 11th chapter "Kriṣi-grāma" of the *Lalita-vistara*. He had finished his education probably including the use and practice of weapons. He was developed in body and mind and approaching the age of youthfulness. Without intimating his parents, he went to the garden in order to observe the working of the farm, accompanied by other young men, the sons of ministers. Having seen farmwork, he turned aside and entered the garden. Deeply distressed in mind, walking, alone and accompanied by none, to and fro and about, he discerned a soothing and beautiful rose-apple (jambu) tree. There under its shade, the Bodhisattva sat down. Seated thus, the Bodhisattva attained the concentration of mind. Having obtained it, he organized and dwelt in the First Trance. Then he organized and dwelt in the Second Trance. Thereafter he organized and dwelt in the Third Trance. After that he organized and dwelt in the Fourth Trance. The formula-like descriptions of all the four trances are identically the same as found in the Pāli canon, commentaries, the *Visuddhi-magga* and the English translation of *Vimuttimagga*, as well as in the mixed Sanskrit *Mahā-vastu avadāna* Manuscript leaf No. 115, in the third chapter "Prabhākari" of the Daśa-bhumika Sūtra, etc.

Critical Study

Previous to the attainment of these four trances, the Prince

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was deeply distressed, walked about, sat down under a shady tree, obtained concentration, and organized successively the four gradual trances. We do not apparently see any (definite) gap between the successive trances; it would therefore seem that the first stage gradually merged into the second, the second into the third, and the third into the fourth; but the *Abhidhamma* analysis stipulates that there is a definite gap between these trances, and so state Buddhaghoṣa and Upatissa. We can also use our common-sense in this problem; for, our thinking does not flow in a continuous current uninterrupted by lapses and diversions. None can reasonably entertain an idea that a single stretch of imagination would go on developing to eternity, therefore there is a lapse of break in thinking or meditating, which is a moment or moments or bhavaṅga in Buddhist psychology. Bhavaṅga is a passive moment of our mind, starting from the very beginning of our foetal life; only our active thinking or meditating can obstruct the passivity of the mind, and even often change its quality bit by bit.

Let us examine these trances by means of our common experience. We talk with our friends; when we are alone, we often talk to ourselves; this speaking in the mind is what we regard as a sort of thinking, but it is verbal; in other words, it is vitakka. If we do not direct the mind towards any object or subject internal or external, our thinking turns into a sort of meditation. It loses interest in mental speaking or vitakka; therefore the vitakka is slowly suppressed. Off and on vitakka will appear in words, as if we spoke them or remembered them; it is often actually not so. Due to our verbal habit, the words pass on like our unintentional memory or remembrance; we should not attend to them; then the mind keeps moving on without interference from vitakka. Now we are in the First Trance.

The mind may seem to roam about within the mind without any spoken words; it is some concept or vicāra; but we should not be attentive to vicāra also; consequently it will also subside slowly. With the suppression of vitakka and the subsidence of vicāra, the mind may assume its natural poise. It is not passive; it is necessarily active; it will be more or less alert, aware, or mindful. But we shall not be sure of the elimination of vitakka or vicāra; for even the adepts are not fully sure of the same at

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this stage. This uncertainty does not make any difference to our equanimity at the time. This is the First Trance as mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Hence the First Trance of the Buddha's system of meditation is in consonance with our everyday experience in our mental life. The depth, quality, and duration of this trance have given it several terms such as samādhi, samāpatti, etc. If we add anything more to its equanimity, it becomes dogmatic and so impure from the meditative point of view as well. The continued practice of such a trance will lead one to some path not very different from that of the Buddha himself. The Buddha has discovered its devices, taught ways to attain it, and expounded its significance.

Our common sense reaches so far only. To transcend it, we shall have to be as resolute as the Shākya Prince himself, or to follow his method as closely as possible in our current circumstances obtaining in the modern world. The motive and purpose for doing so may be personal, national, and international. It is not confined within any theology, metaphysical doctrines, or even materialistic view-points. But the Buddha insists that it should be undertaken for ethical, humanitarian, and liberational objectives. This trance is the foundation for developing supernormal powers and as such they might be channelled even into something undesirable, harmful, and inhuman. Hence we should, from the very beginning, cultivate a moral attitude to guard ourselves against possible later temptations.

NOTE

[1]*The Path of Purification*, p. 171. See also *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History* by Edward J. Thomas, M. S., D. Litt (St Andrews), p. 66, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1931.

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VIII

The Buddha's Gradual Enlightenment

The Gradual Course

IN THE reminiscence of the Buddha, we find the gradual course through which he obtained Enlightenment. This course is the remembrance of the First Trance organized much earlier by him under the rose-apple tree, its resumption, then the Second Trance, then the Third Trance, thereafter the Fourth Trance; on the basis or foundation of the Fourth Trance, the course proceeds to the first supernatural knowledge and then to the second similar knowledge and lastly to the third supermundane knowledge of complete liberation. This account is fully related by the Buddha himself; the following suttas or discourses of the *Majjhima Nikāya* contain the account; the commentary on these suttas is given in the Papañca-sūdani of Buddhaghoṣa.

Mahā-Saccaka-Sutta, the 36th sutta of the first part of *Mula-Paṇṇāsaka*. It was in the Kūṭāgāraśālā situated in the great forest near the city of Vesāli. The Buddha recounted his early life in a discourse with Saccaka Nigaṇṭha-putta, a sophisticated dialectician. The full story of this Saccaka is found in the commentary on the previous "Cūla-Saccaka" and the next "Mahā-Saccaka" suttas, it is very interesting. His parents were learned dialecticians. His four elder sisters were also like their parents. This Saccaka was the youngest of the four and

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more learned than the latter. The four sisters had already been defeated in discussion by Sāri-putta and become successful nuns in the Buddhist Order. Saccaka was the teacher of the sons of the Licchavi princes. Although he listened to these two discourses given by the Buddha, he did not accept Buddhism. But it is said that, two hundred years after the Great Decease (Pari-Nibbāna) of the Master, he was born in the Island of Tambapaṇṇi and became a great monk named Kāla-Buddha-Rakkhita and also a teacher of King Tissa. Such rebirth stories are plentiful in Buddhism; this is only a sample.

Bodhi-Rājakumāra Sutta, the 35th sutta of the second part of the *Majhima Paṇṇāsaka*. It was in the Kokanada Palace of Prince Bodhi in the Bhagga country, when the Buddha was staying in the Deer-park of Bhesakalā-vana in the Susumāra Mountain. The Buddha told the Prince his early life in answer to Bodhi-Rājakumāra's typical question. The main events are similar to those in the sutta mentioned above. The identical accounts of the achievement of the Master are also found in the last or 50th sutta of the second part, named "Saṅgārava Sutta". The discourse was held with a learned Brāhman scholar named Saṅgārava. It was in the Mango grove of the Todeyya Brāhmans in the Cancali-kappa of the Kosala country. The Master related his early life to the scholar.

The main portion of the gradual course, without recounting the previous accounts, has been given, as the reminiscence of the Master, by himself in the following suttas, and also his teachings thereof.

Bhaya-bherava Sutta, the 4th sutta of the first part of the *Majhima Nikāya*. It was in Sāvatthi, the capital of Kosala. There the Master gave a discourse to Jāṇussoṇi Brāhman, the Preceptor of the Master says that he is free from delusions (asammoha-dhammo satto); he knows the night when it is the night and he knows the day when it is the day, not like other meditationists who know the night and the day conversely due to meditative delusion. This assertion of the Master proves the thesis that the small kasiṇa method of elements described by Buddhaghoṣa in the *Visuddhi-magga* is foreign to the Buddha's own method of meditation detailed above in this research. In this sutta, he tells the Brāhman how he achieved, through the

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organizing of and dwelling in the four trances and the three supernormal knowledges, the last of which is full supermundane Enlightenment.

Dvedhā-vitakka Sutta, the 19th sutta of the first part of the same book. It is in Sāvatthi. The Master relates the same portions of his achievement as in the above sutta to his disciples. In his teachings also, the Buddha has often taught a similar course, beginning with the four trances and the two superior knowledges, and ending with the third one of liberation, in which the four noble truths are dealt with. So it is found in the 27th, 39th, and, upto the fourth trance only, 25th suttas of the first book. The most useful instructions, together with the Master's own experience regarding them, are found in the 28th sutta of the third book.

In the *Digha Nikāya*, the famous Sāmañña-Phala Sutta, the 2nd one of the first book, deals with a similar course; the only difference lies in the addition of five supernormal powers between the Fourth Trance and the first superior knowledge. But generally we find the usual graduation in achieving the ultimate target of liberation, that is, beginning with the Four Trances, and, through supernormal knowledges, we come to the four noble truths.

Abhidhamma Course

It is very difficult to dogmatize about the authenticity of the *Abhidhamma* method. The voluminous sutta piṭaka could be comprehended only in some condensed form. None could have made it shorter and at the same time easier to comprehend than what we find in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. It is not however presented in a philosophical form, as we would have liked the whole collection to have been done. The problem must have been then, as now, of preserving the actual words of the Master. As a matter of fact we have several schools of later Buddhist philosophies which could not and cannot satisfy us with their claim of these doctrines representing the Buddha's views, not to speak of his own words and discourses. On the other hand, the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* can claim that it is based on the Sutta Piṭaka for its classification. We actually find several portions reproduced from the suttas and included in it.

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From the meditational point of view, however, it will not be useful to study the *Abhidhamma* Collection as a whole. For it classifies the whole *Tipiṭaka* consisting of tenets not directly concerned with the system we are endeavouring to find out in this research. If any amateur be very inquisitive to know as to how our topic of form trances is mainly dealt with, so far as they touch the mundane type only and not the supramundane one we may satisfy his curiosity in later phases only. Here we can only refer to the relevant places in the books of the *Abhidhamma.* It should be understood that the study of these pieces is not, necessary for organizing, developing, or even channelling the trances under research.

Relevant Places

Dhamma-Saṅgaṇi, the first book, deals with the four jhānas of the active category in the first section of the second chapter, paragraphs 14 to 22. It has already been explained that the four trances become five, by bifurcating the second trance into two stages, a-vitakka vicāra-matta and a-vitakka-vicāra. We have given them under the heading, "The Second Trance" above. The resultant of these active jhānas is given in the 2nd section of the first chapter in the third part, "Abyākata Dhamma". It has been already explained elsewhere before that the formal jhānas are flows of appanā and therefore they are like javana and have no tadārammaṇa. The resultant mentioned herein means a sort of habitual flow of jhāna, like our ordinary bhavaṅga, in the future form life, or what is termed Brahmaloka's life. It may appear dgmatic at a first glance, so we can treat of this controversial subject in later phases only.

Vibhaṅga, the second book, takes up the formal jhānas in the 12th chapter, in the first section. The words of the formula of each jhāna are explained herein by means of equivalent words. The latter will help the amateur to understand the meaning of the formula at first hand.

Dhātu-kathā and Puggala-Paññatti the 3rd and 4th books, are comparatively smaller than any of the other books. The first of these two is useful for ready answers to questions. Therefore one should look up here only those questions and answers which mention—sa-vitakka sa-vicāra, a-vitakka vicāra-matta,

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sukha sahagata, sappitika dhammas. These terms will not present any difficulty to an amateur. I have not given here 'a-vitakka a-vicāra'; this term will demand a certain explanation, so it was excluded.

The fourth book is very interesting; it gives us different types of individuals from the Buddhist point of view; it may be consulted for some types of persons which are easily found here. For our purpose, paragraphs 75 to 80 of the fourth chapter and the third section of the fifth chapter are relevant. These types are also found in the suttas.

Katha-vatthu

The fifth book of the *Abhidhamma* was evidently compiled in the time of Aśoka; but its proponents claim that the outline of this work was given before by the Master, and was amplified later by Moggalli-putta Tissa. We are not disputing the assertion. But it is useful, as we have cited from this book several topics before. Besides these topics, the following kathās would be interesting and also useful: From the 9th Vagga—7th and 8th kathas on vitakka; 11th vagga—8th kathā on samādhi; 13th vagga—7th kathā on tasting of Jhāna; 16th vagga—9th kathā on form; 18th vagga—8th kathā on hearing sounds. These kathās concern meditation; the points for and against a particular view will be of interest to an amateur.

Yamaka or Book of Pairs

The sixth book is called "Yamaka" or the Pair. This book has been adversely criticized by several modern savants. They express their doubt on its usefulness. But we have already seen that the books of the *Abhidhamma* are compiled and classified from the suttas for various purposes and reasons. They are not meant to serve as a systematized book on philosophy. Their proponents say that the method of the *Abhidhamma* is to treat a subject exhaustively. If we learn to use it, it will give us a good and ready reference. It may not help us in meditation; but, if we feel some doubt on a certain question it can provide a ready means to dispel it, so far as the *Abhidhamma* School is concerned.

There are three parts to this book. In the first part, the second

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chapter "Khandha Yamaka", 1st section only of the Niddesa, will give an amateur or a novice a clear idea of the five khandhas or fundamental collections. Similarly will do the Niddesa only of the third chapter "Āyatana-Yamaka", and the fourth chapter "Dhātu-Yamaka". It is known that, in Buddhism, these three fundamentals, viz., Khandha, āyatana, dhātu, should be clearly differentiated at least in one's own mind. The first section only of the Niddesa of the above chapters can be easily read and understood. In the second part, "Saṅkhāra Yamaka" will be very interesting, because it treats of respirations, vitakka vicāra, and mental perception and feeling; it is a little more lengthy, but the same thing is repeated in different ways. So it is not hard to understand.

Patthana

The seventh or last book of the *Abhidhamma* is the Paṭṭhāna. It is in six volumes. In the commentary its name is given as *Paṭṭhāna-Mahā-pakaraṇa*. It deals with all Buddhist tenets and elements as conditioned by twenty-four modes, relations, or causes (paccayas). We know, there are four noble truths—suffering, its arising, its cessation, the path leading to cessation. The Buddha has elaborately explained, in many suttas, the nature of the suffering; we cannot deny its existence; we can however say that we shall suffer for others.

Bodhi-sattvas have done the same thing; they have taken upon their shoulders the task of liberating the world through voluntary suffering until the task is accomplished: this is the main doctrine of the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism current in Nepal also.

The suffering, as explained by the Buddha, includes everything we can possibly think of. We may doubt the cause of suffering; the emphasis on the craving as the principal cause is open to modern critical examination. The cessation of suffering is however undeniable; meditation, trance, insight, and intellect prove its validity to our entire satisfaction. The Path may be put to experiment; some tenets claim to provide easier ways; some give us a short formula to be repeated daily; some offer pure belief, faith, or even a remembrance of the highest deity or principle for our deliverance. The Master has nothing like

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such recipe for genuine deliverance or liberation or Nibbāna. But we are not discussing such controversial matters in this research.

The cause of suffering and its deliverance was further elaborated in an ever-circling chain of cause-effect-cause, known as "Dependent Origination" (Paticca-samuppāda) consisting of twelve links, viz., ignorance,...craving,...death; rebirth or future manifestation with ignorance,...craving,...death; and so on. The complete elimination of any one of these links breaks the chain and brings about one's deliverance. This is also fully explained in several lengthy suttas.

In order to explain the mode, relation, or condition affecting and effecting the dependent origination, twenty-four paccayas or conditioning factors were employed in the Paṭṭhāna. So this work covers everything worth considering in Buddhism. If we learn how to locate an item, we can at once find o t its exhaustive implications; anyone may correct his ideas regarding any Buddhist tenet and element. For example, an immoral action, even by long similar practice, will never turn out to be a moral one; because a cursory reference to the condition (paccaya) of practice (āsevana) will disclose that it is impossible; if an argument ensues over it, one will have to face the formidable array of elements in the Paṭṭhāna and thereby the whole *Tipiṭaka*—an impossible task for any debater.

For our purpose, the following portions will be of use to an amateur; Paṭṭhāna lst volume—Paccaya-Nidāna (introduction) paragraph 9 Upa-nissaya, paragraph 12 Āsevana; paragraph 371 Upa-nissaya on the access meditation to the four trances. 2nd volume paragraphs 109 to 112 on Vitakka Vicāra. 4th volume Rūpācara-Duka, Upa-nissaya, paragraph 252. 5th volume, Sa-Vitakka-Duka, section 87(1); Sa-Vicāra-Duka, section 88(1); Vitakka-Tika, section 6(1); these portions contain the condition (paccaya) of Hetu or fundamental root of moral content. These portions were referred here only to give an idea of the Paṭṭhāna to an amateur. It is however not necessary for meditation.

It must be understood that, when a person is in a trance, his mind can never be of an immoral content, according to the Buddhist tenet. It is only after the trance that the question of

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morality comes in. Hence the best way to escape the problem is to organize the trance. Even after the trance, one's mind remains morally good, if one is thinking over the nature of one's trance without attachment and doctrinal obsession. The Buddha's method of meditation we are dealing with in our research is free from any object or subject, external or internal, from the very beginning. Hence it is, according to the Buddhist definition itself, not mundane, but approaching a certain stage of supramundane. None can logically deny this fact. More will be said in later phases as to why this sort of trance is necessarily of a supramundane character. At this stage, the question will be too premature to touch upon.

Vinaya Pitaka Version

Mahā-vagga, the first book of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, has the Bodhi-kathā in the very beginning. This kathā or story opens with the Buddha under the Bodhi tree, recently enlightened (paṭhama-abhisam-buddho). The Master sat down under the Bodhi tree for a week, experiencing the happiness of liberation. Then the Master, in the first watch of the night, investigated the causal chain (paṭicca-samuppāda) in both the orders, etc. This first account in this book is evidently subsequent to his attainment of Enlightenment through the gradual process dealt with earlier. For, we find the Buddha's own reminiscence of the gradual process in the very first sutta "Verañja Brāhmaṇa Pucchā" or the question of Verañja-Brāhmaṇa under the introductory "Paññati-Nidāna Kathā" of the Pārājika, the third book. The Master was then staying in the Verañja country. There a certain Brāhmaṇa, called Verañjo, came to visit the Master and informed him of nine allegations made by the Brāhmaṇa against him. They were amply refuted by the Master. Then, in order to show his seniority and superiority, he gave a simile of eggs and the first-born from one of them. And the Master continued the discourse with his reminiscence of first enlightenment. The four trances, three knowledges, and the attainment of full liberation were related to the Brāhman.

The above sutta or kathā is also found in the Verañja Sutta, the first one of the second vagga in the eight-item Nipāta of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. So both the sutta and the Vinaya Piṭakas

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confirm that the Buddha organized the four trances, upon which he built, through the three knowledges, the system of early Buddhism. We shall show, from the third phase of this research, how he developed the two knowledges from the trance and, on the analysis of these two knowledges, how he arrived at the third conclusion or supramundane insight or knowledge, which will be taken up for research in the last phase.

Nagasena's Version

It is worthy of special note that Nāgasena expresses a different opinion on this head of the Master's first Enlightenment. It is given in the 30th to 32nd paragraphs of the 4th part "Meṇḍaka-Pañha" in the 3rd vagga or section. King Milinda asked the savant why the two meals, one on the eve of attaining the first Enlightenment, and the other just before the Great Decease of the Master, were of great and equal merit. Nāgasena replied that it was due to the Nine Gradual Trances being organized in the obverse and reverse orders. The King put in a question: "Is it, Bhante, Nāgasena, that the Tathāgata (Buddha) organizes, only these two days, in a very great degree, the nine gradual trances obversely and reversely?" Nāgasena replied: "Yes, Mahārāja!" These nine trances are the four form jhānas and four formless samāpattis and the ninth is the cessation of consciousness and feeling. It shows another tradition which Nāgasena evidently follows. We shall treat of the formless trance in the second phase of this research. The nine gradual trances are so normally graduated that Nāgasena should have thought the tradition quite tenable; the savant knew the main theme of enlightenment; still he must have held the Ninth Trance "Saññā-Vedayita-Nirodha Samāpatti" as the means of directly realising the Nibbāna, the summum bonum of Buddhism. It can only be attained through the gradual form and formless trances mentioned above. We shall show in the second phase how it is naturally and normally possible to transcend the fourth Jhāna and organize the successive stages of formless samāpatti or trance.

Version of Mixed Sanskrit Texts

The *Mahā-vastu-avadāna* describes the usual gradual progress

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to Enlightenment. The Manuscript, leaf No. 115, states that the Bodhisattva organized the four form trances; thereafter the three knowledges were gained; and then the four noble truths were completely brought to light.

The *Lalita-vistara*, in the 22nd chapter, recounts the same usual gradual progress to the Bodhisattva's Enlightenment. The four form trances are identical in both mixd Sanskrit and Pāli texts. The first and second knowledges are, however, differently given in it. The first knowledge herein is the same as found in the Pāli text. The second knowledge is extended herein and contains the first knowledge of the Pāli text together with the knowledge of the past lives of other persons. Third knowledge is depicted in a much more logical manner herein than in the Pāli text. Consequently, the dependent origination is fully investigated as also found elsewhere in the Pāli texts.

Daśa-Bhūmīśvara Mahā-yāna Sūtra has a little different but fuller account. It was in the second week after Enlightenment. The Buddha was sojourning in the sixth Deva-loka. In its third chapter, the progress is stated as beginning with the usual four trances, then the four formless samāpattis, thereafter the seven kinds of supernatural powers, and then the first knowledge of the past lives and the second knowledge of supernormal seeing and other people's life-whirls. It shows therefore that Nāgasena was definitely following an old tradition in this respect.

Importance of the Four Trances

The above-given different versions of the attainment of the full Enlightenment of the Shākya Prince have established the fact that the gradual four trances are the fundamental basis of further development and culmination of the Buddha's entire system of meditation, insight, and teaching. We have clearly, so to say, shown that this type of meditation is natural, logical, free from artificial means such as small-sized kasiṇa methods of later adoption, and without dependence on any object or subject, internal or external, for meditating. Because of its non-dependence on anything whatsoever, the meditation and trance and samāpatti and samādhi approach the level of the supramundane category, which is the main kernel of the Buddha's teaching for complete liberation; this is also the

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intellectual view of the psychological experience of the Nibbānic state. There is thus no incantation of any kind, no prayer, no worship to any deity, and no philosophical doctrine to be followed, and no imaginary devotion in the meditative system of Sarvārtha-siddha or Siddhārtha or Siddhatta, of the Bodhisattva or Bodhisatto, and of the Shākya Muni, Gautama Buddha.

We have also explained, with details of practice, that meditation on this method is not difficult to organize. The Buddha is the guide; his reminiscences on this subject are our lessons; the experience he has related himself is the source of our inspiration. We are not complicating the simple issue with all the paraphernalia of our past merit or demerit, because we do not remember our past lives at present. The Buddha taught in the Bhaddeka-ratta Sutta quoted elsewhere above that we are to be alert and careful and live in the present, not lamenting the past with repentance or attachment as well as not longing for the future with wishful thinking.

There is a vast literature on Buddhism; anyone may choose any section of it; if one is able or alert to take the unattached attitude or view-point of the Master, the dogmatism of any school will not matter much to an amateur. For the Master discards all sorts of dogmatism, as will be evident in and from the very first sutta "Brahma-Jāla Sutta" of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, and the first sutta "Mula-Pariyāya Sutta" of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. Why is it so? The answer is to be found in the Master's attitude formed by his meditative experience. The four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent origination, and even the twenty-four causal conditions were all derived by the Master from his own meditative insight. This is plain from his discussion with Lord Baka Brahmā in the 49th sutta "Brahma-Nimantanika Sutta" of the Ist part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The next sutta "Māra-tajjaniya" has a verse-section of 48 lines, the 26th to 32nd lines of which refer to the previous discussion, although the commentary misses the relevant point, only with a slight reference to Baka-Brahmā.

Reference to Relevant Portions

Literature on practical Buddhist meditation is almost all the

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writers have heavily drawn on Buddhaghoṣa for their extracts taken from the few particular suttas of the *Dīgha* and *Majjhima Nikāyas*. The most popular sections are the meditation on resṛ irations (ānāpāna), on the constituents of the body (kāya-gatā), on the ten states of the bodily decomposition (Asubhā-Bhāvanā); the most comprehensive is however the four anupas-sanā or observations, which include the body, feeling, the mind, and the salient mental phenomena; hence the latter is very useful and at the same time very wide and difficult. For, the first of these four, "Kāya-anupassanā", includes the former three kinds, viz., meditation on respiration, on the constituents of the body, and on the ten states of the bodily decomposition The most important, however, is the first, ānāpāna-sati; this is fully explained separately also in the 18th sutta of the third part of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the 2nd section of which deals with it. The 12th sutta of the second part of the same *Nikāya* also treats of this ānāpāna-sati in the 9th section.

Meditation on respiration is not the restraining of the breath, as is done in the prāṇāyāma exercise. It is constantly to keep the movement, which the respiratory organs undergo in each in- and out-breathing, in mind or memory or consciousness. This mental activity quickly suppresses mental speaking or vitakka. Many concepts are taught along with this mindfulness, without attachment to them. The famous "Sati-Paṭṭhāna Sutta" of the *Maṭjhima* and "Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna Sutta' of the *Dīgha Nikāyas* begin with this ānāpāna or meditation on respiration. It is a very important device for Buddhist type of meditation. In other types, such as "Soaham, So 'ham" or 'That is I' and "Svarodaya, Svara-udaya" or the arising and cognition of sound, this ānā-pāna is practised but with a certain philosophical idea that differentiates it from that of the Buddhist.

Meditation on the constituents of the body and on its several states of decomposition is made the means of realising the Buddhist tenet of non-ego and non-attachment with the body, respectively. The latter method needs further elucidation, which can be done only in the later phases. These two kinds of medi-tation are found only in Buddhism, as far as I know. It can be said here that the meditation on the bodily decomposition does no harm to our physical body, as far as my own experience goes.

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It should be borne in mind that meditation is practised without any fear or worldly interests. It is for some higher purpose beyond mundane profits. No teacher of yoga, samādhi, or trance would like to teach anyone in order to gain a worldly objective.

Conclusion

In concluding this first phase, I must, with great humility, recommend to all lovers of meditation the practice of the gradual trances fully detailed and explained so far. There are several similes we come across in the suttas and commentaries; but in and for meditation similes are not so helpful as they may appear; for extraneous matters even in such similes direct one's attention from the main current of meditation and vitakka intervenes in it. Really speaking, meditation is a superior experience; an amateur will be profited greatly by following it by constant practice rather than reading many books on meditation; for meditation is itself a teacher second to none. When the amateur has experienced something extraordinary, then he can look into books for similar accounts; only such an attitude of mind may lead him forward in the pursuit of meditation.

The meditative experiences of others are however very helpful for one's own encouragement. Such an experience is plentiful in the texts as well as in the commentaries. The technical terms are indeed not easy to understand in the light of meditation, specially when someone is said to have attained a state of liberation in a few hours under ordinarily unbelievable circumstances. But it is a sort of sudden insight, non-attachment, or non-ego; it is not exactly an attainment of deep trance we might generally conceive. It is a general rule among meditationists that they do not belittle the experience of others; for, if we do so, we shall be degrading our own belief and faith in meditation. The Buddha has never, as much as I make out his remarks on such an occasion, ridiculed such an experience. Of course he had something to say or comment upon in order to improve it. Meditation should be respected as such.

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Nigamanam

The Concluding Story

IN THE works of the great commentator, Buddhaghoṣa, we find a short concluding story in verses at the end of them. It is given as Nigamanam in the commentary of the first book of the *Abhidhamma*, and as Nigamana-kathā in the next six books of the same book. The word Nigamanam is also found towards the end of the *Visuddhi-magga*. Even where the word is not given as the heading of the concluding story, there are the concluding verses. Such we find in the commentary of the *Dhamma-pada*. As in the commentary of the six books of the *Abhidhamma*, we find the word Nigamanakathā in the Burmese script of the Papañca-Sūdani, the commentary on the *Majjhima Nikāya*. So the word is meant to convey a fruition. The *Lalita-vistara* is, accordingly named the last chapter as "Nigama-Parivarta", wherein the subtance, fruition, and need for propagation of the work are told as a short story with ten verses voicing the same purport.

The Story of this Research Work

I have nothing more to offer the reader or the amateur or even the great number of savants, concerning the subjects dealt with in this phase of my research. Although it is based on the Master's meditative experience, as recorded mostly in

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the Pāli canonical suttas or texts and also to some extent in the mixed Sanskrit texts, it is not the words of the Master. Hence it cannot textually claim any merit or fruition on its mere perusal or storage. Nevertheless it will help interpret the Master's exposition of his own meditational method, in a way which no book on the particular subject under research has done so far to my knowledge.

From my childhood, the stories of devotees in meditation had fired my imagination. When I saw the picture, printed in Burma, depicting the seven weeks' trances of the Master I was greatly enamoured of the feat of the Master. But I was totally ignorant of the Buddhistic method of meditation. Haṭha Yoga used to be usually practised in those days; I also did it. Kuṇḍalini Yoga had always been highly thought of in the country; various devices were in vogue; imaginative practices were not to my liking; some natural ones were agreeable to me. The philosophy of the Kuṇḍalini Yoga has been generally regarded as mystic, not patent like that of Vedānta; for the main device to arouse the Kuṇḍalini is kept very secret, and the certain phenomena at the top centre are not explicable in accepted philosophical terms; nevertheless, this physico-psychological device and trance will, I think, ever remain a source of interest and attraction in meditation.

Vedānta is a very simple and at the same time deeply significant philosophy widely in vogue in the country. It is also open to meditation; so it is natural that it should have attracted me earlier in my life. Its logical conclusion lands one in a unique frame of mind; the problem remains as to how such a state of insight can be maintained through to eternity; but the need for such a concept to be kept alive always in meditation makes one weary of it. Then the Buddha's method of meditation without any pre-conception and doctrinal obsession came to my notice, about forty years before; it caught my fancy tremendously, as I remember it even now. Thus began my humble excursion and research in the Buddha's method of meditation.

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Bibliography

Simple Method

A MERE list of books given at the end of any work is, to voice my humble opinion, worthless. It cannot help any person, amateur, novice, savant, or researcher. A long list of books at the end does not actually mean that the author of the work has consulted all the books listed. He might have probably consulted the index and noted a few relevant points only from some of the books. Such points may not even conform to his thesis in the context of the borrowed portion of the books consulted. It is specially so in Buddhist canon, commentary, and literature. For example, it will be necessary to read all the relevant suttas of the canon to find out whether the Shākya Prince, Bodhisattva, or Buddha practised the ānāpāna as a preliminary step to organize the famous First Jhāna, as the commentary tells us. If we do not find it in the canon, then and there only can we say that the tale of the commentary is without any foundation in the canon. It is easy enough to quote a passage from a certain sutta, but very difficult to deny a simple assertion of a portion in the canonical and commentatorial passage.

Hence an amateur should read an original sutta in Pāli, or Mixed Sanskrit, or in translation, whichever is convenient to him. When he has understood it to his satisfaction, he may

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turn over the pages on the same subject in as many books as he has leisure to do. If he finds any difference, he should stick to his original source. In course of time he will find that he is right. Even if he is wrong, it will not invalidate his original understanding. He will have to improve it gradually. Thus the Buddha made his progress toward his search after what is good (kiṅ kusala gavessnā). The Bibliography given here should be consulted in the above-mentioned method. In the body of this work enough references have already been given. I think that such references would be helpful to an amateur for his practical understanding.

Pali Canon

The Pāli *Tipiṭaka* is available in a number of scripts, such as Singhalese, Siamese, Burmese, Roman, Laotian, Bengali, etc. All the thirty-one books of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* are now available in 41 volumes in the Devanagari script and published by the Pāli Publication Board, Bihar Government. I have referred to these books. They give, in the margin the page number of the Roman edition as R . . . and that of the Burmese edition as B . . . In each of these volumes, the Pāli alphabet is indicated and given on two pages in Devanāgari and Roman characters. Moreover, there is an introduction to the content of each volume.

1—41 Volumes of Pāli *Tipiṭaka*; Vinaya 5 Volumes; Sutta—*Digha* 3, *majjhima* 3, Samyutta 4, *Aṅguttara* 4, Khuddaka 9, total volumes 23; *Abhidhamma* 13 volumes. These are all in the Pāli language.

42—50 Nine Dharma Works of Nepal, out of which the *Lalita-vistara* has been mostly drawn upon; these works are preserved in Newāri scripts in Nepal. I have used the *Lalita-vistara* in Deva-nāgari published by the Mithilā Institute, Darbhanga, India. From *Daśa-bhūmika Sūtra* I have quoted several times; a few instances from *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* were given, both of them are from the same publication. Other works of the Nine might be used for

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reference in later phases. They are in mixed and gāthā Sanskrit.

51— *Mahā-vastu-avadāna*; this work is available in printed volumes, but those were not readily available here at present; so I consulted and noted down from the Manuscripts, copied by Jaya Muni in the Nepal Year 777 (1657 A.D.); it is in Newāri script and contains 238 leaves (476 pages); it is kept in the Rāṣṭriya Abhilekhālaya (National Archives), Kathmandu, Nepal. I have given several quotations from this work.

52— *Milinda-Pāñha*; this work is in Pāli; several quotations are given; but it contains mostly questions on Buddhist tenets only. Unfortunately for us, Nāgasena has not dealt with any clear method of meditation herein, nor has he treated of a systematic process of Buddhist psychology in this work. I used the book of Bombay University Publication Bombay Ist edition; it is in Pāli and Deva-nāgari.

53— *Buddha-caritam*, by the Poet Aśvaghoṣa, Vidya Bhavana Sanskrit Grantha mālā No. 82, Parts I & II; it is in Devanāgari and Sanskrit; but from the three-quarters of the 14th canto to the last or 28th canto the Sanskrit verses are only third re-translation and so unreliable. I have used only upto the first quarter of the 14th canto.

Commentaries in Pāli

Texts need commentaries for several reasons. The former cannot ordinarily be increased or decreased to suit changing circumstances. So the latter come in for the purpose. It is done by interpreting the texts in a different sense and meaning. If the commentary grows old, it is regarded as traditional and authoritative. But we have clearly seen that the commentary is not the text and cannot be accepted without due consideration and scrutiny. If we fail to do so, we shall be following something alien and incongruous to the original text.

There is ample indication in the Pāli canon itself that the

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Master's short precepts were enlarged by his learned disciples. These enlargements were however repeated before the Master and are reported to have received his sanction. It may not seem unnatural that it has so, as is evident from the accounts of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*; everything of importance was told before the Master, who had to make rules appropriate to the public demand and his own sense of judgement. Thus the codes of conduct came into being gradually, not all at one time. This is clear from the 4th section of the very first sutta of the third book "Pārājika" of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. Sāriputta requests the Master to formulate the rules and to make the Patimokkha for recitation. The Master disapproves the proposal and says: "Wait, Sāriputta; wait, Sariputta. The Tathāgata (Buddha) himself will know the time thereto." It shows that there was not even the first recitation-book, Pātimokkha, at that time.

Hence the commentary gradually grew up. It was carried over to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) probably with the *Tipiṭaka* at the time of Aśoka. At first it might have been orally rendered to the Sinhalese disciples and general audiences. From the experience we have had in Nepal, we can fairly imagine that the original Pāli commentary may have been changed, improved upon or enlarged. Later on it was written down in Sinhalese. After a few hundred years, this version was condensed and re-translated into Pāli by Buddhaghoṣa and other savants. Consequently the present commentary, even if it is in Pāli, cannot be taken as the very same original in Pāli itself. So we must try to understand the text from the textual version itself as much as possible and not solely depend on the extant commentary only.

General Information

Critical literature in Pāli is vast; it will need a full chapter to give even a little information on it. The most important commentator is the famous Buddhaghoṣa. He has given us almost all the commentaries on the books of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. They contain the various meanings of the words of the text, legends concerning some names, persons, and places, and also the lives of monks and laymen past and of his times. But his exposition is often mixed with technical terms, kasiṇa-complex,

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and later Buddhist psychological terms and ideas. These are not easy or smooth for reading and comprehension to an amateur or even to a learned person unacquainted with Pāli tenets. The legends and stories are very interesting and useful for any writer on ancient lore. The lives of monks will, I think be a source of encouragement and inspiration for a meditationist. It is better to read only a few relevant pieces of the commentary on the suttas one has read in the original. As the words of the text are taken for comment, it is necessary to read the text first before reading a commentary thereon.

The import of the Pāli word is not the same as its counterpart in Sanskrit; therefore, the short meaning should be selected from the commentary without going into details about it; the reader may be lost in details if he goes over them. But a researcher should not rest content with a single commentary only; he should find out a few other commentaries on similar suttas in other *nikāyas*; by doing so he will profit by their comparison.

To resume the Bibliography, I have consulted the following commentaries in Pāli:

54—58 Papañca-sūdani, Buddhaghoṣa's commentary on *Majjhima Nikāya*, two volumes in Sinhalese and three volumes in Burmese script. The former are Simon Hewavitarne Bequest, Volumes 35 & 44. The Tripitaka Publication Press, Colombo, Ceylon. The latter are printed under the Buddha-Sasana-Samiti, Burma.

In the introductory portion of the first part, a very useful paragraph is given about the *Majjhima Nikāya*. It is said, "The Majjhima Sangiti (Nikāya or Āgama) has 80,523 padas (pāda), or 740,053 letters (Akkhara)" so that each pada consists of 9.2 letters (instead of 8 letters) herein, on an average. In counting verses, each of 32 letters, as in the Sanskrit method, it comes to 250 gāthās or verses (ślokas) in one Bhāṇavāra. Moreover, it has 3,900 connections or items of Dhammas (anusandhi).

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(Note.—One thousand padas would, even in prose, make a bhāṇavāra.)

At the end of the commentary, Buddhaghoṣa says: "Taking the substance of the Mahā-aṭṭha-kathā, this was finished. It has 107 bhāṇavāras. As the *Visuddhi-magga* is needed for exposition in each commentary and it has 59 bhāṇavāras, so the total bhāṇavāras of this should be counted as 166." The *Maha-aṭṭha-kathā* was in the Sinhalese language and is not available after his time. Hence this commentary is more than double the text.

59— Manoratha-Pūraṇi, do. in Sinhalese script, published under the Vidyālankara Parivena, printed in Satya-Samuccaya Press, Colombo, Ceylon, in 1904 A.D. At the end, Buddhaghoṣa mentions the *Maha-aṭṭha-kathā* and says that it contains 94 bhāṇavāras and together with 59 ones of the *Visuddhi-magga* the total will be counted as 153 bhāṇavāras.

60— Pañca-pakaraṇa-aṭṭha-kathā, do. on the 3rd to 7th books of the *Abhidhamma*, in Burmese script, printed under the Buddha-Sāsana-Samiti, Burma. It includes the commentary on the famous *Kathā-vatthu* and also on the last book Paṭṭhāna. All the bhāṇavāras in these five commentaries amount to 41. I should be understood that a bhāṇavāra is counted as one thousand padas (or pādas), or 250 gāthās or ślokas, each of 32 letters usually. It is not counted even by page; in Pāli or in Sanskrit a pada or pāda will thus contain eight letters; for example, the commentary on the *Kathā-vatthu* has 13 bhāṇavāras but 182 pages; on the other hand, that on the Paṭṭhāna has 14 bhāṇavāras but 159 pages only.

61— Aṭṭhasālini, commentary on the first book of the *Abhidhamma*, in Devanāgari, Bhandarakar Oriental Series No. 3, Ist edition, Poona, 1942 A.D. It has 39 bhāṇavāras, but 337 pages. This work is very useful even for an amateur. Compared to the *Visuddhi-magga*, it is smooth reading and not very

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difficult to understand, although it is also attributed to the same Buddhaghoṣa.

62—69 *Dhamma-pada Aṭṭha-kathā*, in Siamese (of Thailand) script, printed in the capital of Siāmaraṭṭha, under Mahācudālaṅkaraṇa-Rājavidyālaya, in B.E. 2485 (1941). It is in 8 volumes; but it is also available in a single big volume in the Sinhalese script. It contains comments on the first verse and the first declaration of the Buddha after his Enlightenment. At the end Buddhaghoṣa (some doubt it) counts all the stories by vaggas and makes up the number to 299; it has 72 bhāṇavāras and about 1200 pages or a little less. He expresses gratitude to the Adhirāja Sirigutta (Sirikuḍḍa, in Sinhalese), in whose constructed palatial vihāra he finished this work.

70— Jātaka-aṭṭha-kathā, in Pāli and Devanāgari, Jñāna-Piṭha Murti Devi Pāli Grantha-mala No. 1 Bhāratiya Jñānapiṭha, Kāshi. It contains the full *Nidāna-kathā* and 150 Jātaka stories. It is however available in five volumes elsewhere and contains 547 Jātaka stories. Aṭṭhasālini mentions 550 stories in the Jātaka, but from the Apaṇṇaka to the Vessantara there are only 547 stories extant, the remaining three stories having been seemingly lost.

71— Nidāna-kathā, in Pāli and Devanāgari, Bombay University Publication, Bombay, 1st edition, 1935.

72— *Visuddhi-maggo*, in Pāli and Devanāgari, Bhāratiya Vidyā Series, Volume 1, edited by Dharmānanda Kosāmbi, Bombay, 1940. This is the only authoritative book that deals with the process of the three main things, viz., Sīla, Samādhi, Prajñā. But, due to his strict adherence to a particular tradition, Buddhaghoṣa practically made entry into his method rather a feat disappointing to any amateur, novice, or even a savant. His demands are too high for any modern would-be practicer. His method is also sometimes unlike that of the Master himself. The easy and simple method of the Master has been made sometimes very intricate and difficult by his

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exegetical comments. In other respects he has wonderfully given us the old tradition in his numerous commentaries on the *Tipiṭaka*. We cannot do away with his valuable accounts, legends, and stories preserved in these commentaries.

73— *Visuddhi-magga-dīpikā*, in Pāli and Devanāgari, by Dharmānanda Kosāmbi, Mahā Bodhi Society, Sārnāth, Benares, 1943. A short sub-commentary on the above, it is very useful for rapid reading. In the Preface the learned author writes: "The *Visuddhi-magga* is itself a commentary . . . So there is no need of an elaborate commentary on it such as the *Paramaṭṭha-manjūsā* (or *Mahā-ṭikā*) of Dhammapālācariya, which has not made the study of the *Visuddhi-magga* itself easier. Although I have followed it in many places, I have avoided its method. Occasionally, I have pointed out its defects, but refrained from detailed criticism . . ."

The learned author has made some remarks in respect of Buddhaghoṣa's information in the Preface to the *Visuddhi-magga* edited by him and listed above. He says at page xiv: "Of Patañjali or any northern tradition, Buddhaghoa knew little. Out of all Patañjali, only the terms animā and laghimā are mentioned, without any further knowledge of the *Yogasūtra*. There is no comparative study, nor even a single reference to the work or name of Patañjali... All his knowledge of other sects does not exceed that of a learned Singhalese monk of today, or of a southern Bhikkhu of about the 11th century A.D. (such as Anuruddha or Dhammapāla). The methods, principles, or even the existence of the great Mahāyāna teachers such as Nāgārjuna and Aśvaghoṣa, seem to be unknown to him..."

I however differ from the learned author on both the points. An elaborate sub-commentary is often needful. The defect is human. On the second point, Buddhaghoṣa had to follow the old tradition; so he is not expected to write a comparative book on Buddhist tenets. But he should have given us the method of the Master rather than an intricate and artificial one. As such

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the latter may or may not be productive to generating a meditation we desire. I am not inclined to touch on the philosophical doctrines at this stage, nor on their comparative study. I shall show later on that the Buddha's own philosophy developed on his system of meditation free from dogmatic doctrines.

74— *Paramattha-mañjūsa* or *Mahā-ṭīkā* of Dhammapāla, sub-commentary on the *Visuddhi-magga*, in Sinhalese script, published by Mr. S.K. Moonesinha, and printed at the Mahā-Bodhi Press, Colombo, Ceylon, in 1930 A.D. Upto the 16th Chapter, pages 544. The remaining seven chapters are not with me at present. I have already quoted something from this book.

75— *Abhidhamma-aṭṭha-saṅgha*, in Pāli and Devanāgari, with a sub-commentary by Dharmānanda Kosāmbi. This work is by Rev. Anuruddha; it is a compendium of Buddhist psycho-philosophy. It was published by Mahā-Bodhi Society, Sārnāth, Benares, in 1941 A.D. It can be easily read without any other sub-commentaries, of which there are several.

76— Mixed Sanskrit works—*Divyāvadānam*, in Sanskrit and Devanāgari, published by The Mithila Institute, Darbhanga, 1958. It has 38 stories, out of which I have quoted from the 27th story. The 26th story is interesting on account of the conversion of Māra by Upagupta. The same story is also found in the Aśokavadānamālā Manuscripts Leaf Nos. 26 and 27, wherein Māra is asked by Upagupta to assume the form of the Buddha.

77— Do. Aśokāvadāna mālā Manuscripts, in Newāri and Nepali script, kept in the National Archives at Kathmandu. I have referred to pilgrimage of Aśoka to Kapilavastu and Lumbini.

77— Jaina Ardha-Māgadhi—*Āyāramga Sutta*, edited by Hermann Jacobi, Part I. Text, P.T.S. London, 1882 A.D. Roman. The style is nearly like that of a Pāli sutta. I searched most of the chapters for anything about the system of meditation. I could not find

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anything to the purpose. The language, in several respects, is akin to Pāli.

78— *Vimutti-magga*—The Path of Freedom. The original work is said to have been written by a certain monk named Upatissa. This work was translated into Chinese by Tipiṭaka Saṅghapāla of Funan. It was named *Gedastu Do Ron*. This work was retranslated from the Chinese into English by Reverends N.R.M. Ehara, Some Thera, and Kheminda Thera. It was published by Dr. D. Roland D. Weerasuria, Colombo, Ceylon, in 1961. This book is for the most part similar to the *Visuddhi-magga*; but the latter is authoritative, whereas the former is only useful for comparison with the latter. For without the original Pāli text, the translation in the third hand becomes indeterminate. However, it is useful for a general knowledge of Buddhist ways of explanation.

79— *The Life of the Buddha*, derived from Tibetan works in the Bkah-Hgyur and Bstan-Hgyur, translated (into English) by W. Woodville Rockhill. In its introduction dated Lausanne, June 6, 1884, the author writes: "The Dulva, about the tenth part of the whole Bkah-hgyur,...occupies more than 4,000 leaves of seven lines to the page, each line averaging twenty-two syllables...It is beyond the power of any one scholar to examine them in their entirety, and he must necessarily confine himself to one special subject or branch of research."

He says further: "The Dulva—the Tibetan Vinaya —contains jātakas, avadānas, vyākaraṇas, sūtras, and ūdānas, and in that it resembles the Sanskrit Vinaya." About his work, the author says, among other things, that he has given us "frequently literal translations, of the greater part of the historical or legendary texts contained in the Tibetan Dulva or Vinaya-piṭaka, which is unquestionably the most trustworthy, and probably the oldest portion of the Bkah-hgyur." It has been of help to us in providing

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different versions. I have used the book published by Orientalia Indica, Varanasi, 1972.

80— *A Manual of Buddhism*, translated from Sinhalese MSS, by R. Spence Hardy (1853) published by Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, Vol. LVI, in 1967. The portions translated from some old traditional form of the Sinhalese language have been indicated when they differ from those of Pāli.

81— *Life and Legend of Buddha*, chapters selected from "Le Bouddha et sa Religion," by J. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, Paris, 1866. The English translation from French was made by Laura Ensor, and published by Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., Calcutta, 1957. The author has mentioned the Bodhisatto's trance "under the shade of a jambu tree", and also his reminiscence as "he would recall his childhood's memories, the brilliant early visions he had in his father's garden..." But the reference to the original authority is not expressly indicated.

82— *Buddha, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, the German work, by Dr. Hermann Oldenberg, translated from German into English by William Hoey, published by Indological Book House, Delhi, 1971. The mention of the Bodhisatto's early trance is made, but the definite authority was not found; hence I did not mention it.

83— *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History* by Edward J. Thomas, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1931. The author has displayed a critical approach to several facets of the Buddha and Buddhism. I have profited much by his approach, although I differ from some of his conclusions.

84— *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, Buddhist Literature, the Original German Work, by Maurice Winternitz, translated from the German into English by Mrs. S. Ketkar and Miss H. Kohn, and revised by the author, published by the University of Calcutta, 1933. I had no occasion to quote from

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this work in my research so far, but I hope I shall be able to do so in the later phases of my work.

85— *Buddhist India* by T.W. Rhys-Davids, Preface by the author, October, 1902, 1st. Ed. 1903. Published by Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., First Indian Ed. 1950. Appendix to Chapter X, Pages 121-122, gives a chronological Table of Buddhist Literature, in ten successive periods of composition. These are of course his own supposition. At the end he says: "The above table represents the probable order in which the extant Buddhist documents of this period were composed. They were not yet written, and a great deal has no doubt been lost." It is evidently in respect of the Pāli text only.

His first two orders seems to be logical enough. They are:

"1. The simple statements of Buddhist doctrine now found, in identical words, in paragraphs or verses recurring in all the existing books." He has not however explained the word "all".

"2. Episodes found, in identical words, in two or more of the existing books." The episode of the Prince's Reminiscence of his organizing and dwelling in the First Trance in the farming field of his father near about Kapilavastu will come under this order.

"10. The *Abhidhamma* books; the last of which is the Kathā Vatthu, and the earliest probably the Puggala Paññatti." This estimation of his will not be accepted by the Buddhist savants, inasmuch as the *Nidāna-kathā* of the *Aṭṭhasālini*, pages 2—31, fully refutes such an opinion.

86— *The Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka* or The Lotus of the True Law, translated by H. Kern, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1909. Introduction, pages ix—xxxix, is very interesting. At page xxv, the learned scholar writes: "It is perfectly true that Shākya does not receive the simple title of Deva; why? Because that

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title is far too poor for so exalted a personage who is the Devātideva, the paramount god of gods. So he is called in the Lotus..., and innumerable times in the whole range of Buddhist literature, both in Pāli and Sanskrit."

"It is further undeniable that the title of Adibuddha does not occur in the Lotus, but it is intimated that Shākya is identical with Ādibuddha... It is only by accommodation that he is called Ādibuddha, he properly being anādi, i.e. existing from eternity, having no beginning..." It is to be understood that this work is one of the Nine Dharmas, "to which divine worship is offered", in Nepalese Buddhism. We have however not touched upon its metaphysical questions.

87— *History of Nepal*, edited by Daniel Wright, 1st edn. 1877, published by Susil Gupta (India) Private Ltd. The Editor says in the Preface: "The work translated is the Vansāvali or Genealogical History of Nepal, according to the Buddhist recension... Cambridge, 12th January, 1877." In Chapter II, we read: "The ancient temple of Pashupati having fallen down, the light was buried under the ruins..."

"Ne-Muni, from whom Nepal derives its name, then came (from Dumjā?). The first Rājā was Bhuktamana and the eighth or last Yaksh Gupta. Thereafter three Ahir kings reigned." The last of them "was conquered by the Kiratis, who came from the east". The eighth Kirati king named Jitedasti seems to have been a friend to the Pāṇḍavas. According to W.W. Rockhill (*The Life of the Buddha*, page 15) at the time of the father of Shuddhodana, "the hillmen of the Pāṇḍava tribe were raiding the Shākya country...and Shuddhodana vanquished them." D. Wright says (p. 65): "During this reign (of Jitedasti) Shākya Sinha Buddha came into Nepal from a city named Kapilavastu." Such a visit is, however, not mentioned in the Pāli canon. The sequence of events is often more helpful than the uncertain dates quoted.

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88— *The Path of Purification*, an English translation of *Visuddhi-magga*, by Rev. Nāṇamoli, published by R. Semage, Colombo, Ceylon, 1956. The book is a collection of 23 chapters; each of them paged separately. Hence it is difficult to find a desired portion. It is literally and technically translated. Therefore, the original Pāli *Visuddhi-magga* is easier to understand than this translation. With all my humble apology to the learned Reverend, I think, no amateurs can benefit by such a translation of a work like the comprehensive *Visuddhi-magga*. At least, it did not help me much in any portion for this research.

89— *Saṅga-Yoga-Darśanam*, containing Yoga-Sūtra, Vyāsa-Bhāṣya, sub-commentaries by Vācaspati Miśra, Vijñāna Bhikṣu, and three other scholars, Kashi Sanskrit Series, No. 110, 1935 A.D. The commentary of Vyāsa, *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya*, is so similar in its expression with that of Pāli and Mixed Sanskrit portions that the former might have known the latter. Had we not found the former criticizing the latter on some points of metaphysical psychology, some scholars might have been confused about the chronology of the two. The commentary is useful to determine some of old terms in Pāli.

90— *Yoga-Sūtra*, with sub-commentaries by Bhojarāja and five other scholars, Kashi Sanskrit Series, No. 83, 1930 A.D.

91— *The Yoga System of Patañjali*, containing the English translation of *Sutra*, *Vyāsa-Bhāṣya* and sub-commentary of Vācaspati Miśra, translated by James Haughton Woods; Preface dated—Harvard University, July, 1914. Second Edition, September, 1927. Although this research has entirely relied on the original Sanskrit sources as listed above, the English translation of the learned scholar has given me help to compare my English rendering with his at several places. Moreover, in his Introduction, at page xvii, the "Date assigned to the Yoga-sutras between A.D. 300 and A.D. 500" may raise some

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controversies. Similarly, at page xx, the "Date of the *Yoga-bhāṣya* between A.D. 650 and A.D. 850" will not be readily accepted, especially because sutra work is usually followed rather quickly by its commentary.

92— *The Travels of Fa-Hsien*, retranslated by H.A. Giles, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1923. Personal life of the Master is dealt with from pages 34 to 62, and Kapilavastu is described in pages 35 to 40.

93— *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, by Thomas Watters, edited, after the author's death, by T.W. Rhys-Davids and S.W. Bushell, London Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. I, 1904 and Vol. II, 1905. His description of Kapilavastu to Kusinagara covers pages 1 to 45 in the second volume. An account of Nipolo or Nepal is given on pages 83 and 84.

94— *Saundārananda*, by the Poet Aśvaghoṣa, in Sanskrit and Devanāgari, edited and translated by Sūrya Nārayana Chaudhari, 2nd Ed., 1959. It is a poetic work of 18 cantos. In the first canto we read the story of Kapila and the Shākyas' settlement in the great forest of Nepal. In the second the renunciation of the Bodhisattva; the 3rd canto gives an account of his Enlightenment. From the 4th to the 18th or the last, we read a poetical version of Nanda's life.

95— Rāhula Sāṅkrityāyana—He translated several Pāli works into Hindi. He used therein the Pāli terms. It was his first work Buddha-Caryā in Hindi many years before that drew me to the Buddha's Meditation. I regarded him as my first teacher unseen then. I saw him personally several times. His first work had won me over already and I regard him still as my teacher, although he has passed away.

96— Jagadīsha Kāśyapa—formerly Director of the Nālandā Pāli Institute. He is like my Upajjhāya in Pāli. It was he, the Reverend Monk, who prompted me to offer Pāli in the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the Benares and Bihar Universities. I found

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him a real Buddhist scholar who could interpret the old ideas to the modern generation. I know, he was also desirous of organizing Buddhist trances, but I cannot tell how far he had progressed and realised the same. He has written several books in English and translated several Pāli works into simple and easy Hindi. It was he who established the Pāli Institute at Nālandā, the famous old Buddhist University.

He told me once that he got his first inspiration from an old Dhammapada. He has written a Pali Mahā-vyākaraṇa in Hindi on the Moggallāna system. I had helped him with its arrangements and examples, which he has acknowledged in its Bhūmikā or Preface, as a friend Tapasvi, for I did not like my humble name to be mentioned. It is an example of his magnanimity. He had became a monk of the Order and remained so for the rest of his life. He was religious (āstika) by nature, but a critical writer. I found him a strong believer in the Buddhist Trances, a rare gift among Buddhist scholars of the modern age.

97— Ānanda Kauśallyāyana, one of the Indian Buddhist Revivalists viz. Ananda Rāhula, Kāśyapa, etc. These were the torch-bearers of modern Buddhism in India. Ānanda-ji has also written several treatises in Hindi, but his big work is the Hindi translation of the complete Pāli *Jātaka-aṭṭha-kathā*.

98— *Pāli-English Dictionary* of Pāli Text Society, edited by T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, published for the P.T.S. by Luzac & Company Ltd., London. 1st Ed. 1921—1925, 4th Reprint 1966. This Dictionary is very necessary for anyone interested in any work intended for preparation in Pāli Literature. The meaning of each word has not only been given, but it is referred to various works in Pāli and also Mixed Sanskrit. Every one of us should be thankful to the learned compilers of this monumental Dictionary. I have consulted it for most words, about which I had a doubt. Hence I take this oppor-

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tunity to express my gratitude to its compilers, editors, and publishers.

99— *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, G. & C. Publishers, U.S.A., 1956.

100— *The S.N. Sanskrit (English) Dictionary* by Dr. G.V. Devasthali, enlarged by Y.B. Joshi and G.R. Kulkarni, 2nd Ed. 1955.

101—105 On Yoga: Gheranḍa-Sanhitā; Gorakṣa-Paddhati; Haṭha-Yoga-Pradīpikā; Ṣaṭ-Cakra-Nirūpaṇam; Yoga-sāra-saṅgraha etc.

Miscellany

The meditative experiences of several yogis, Nepalese, Indian and Tibetan I met and kept company with, had been orally told to me; these private talks are not generally noted down. The talk with one Tibetan yogi was however interpreted to me by his disciple of Newar descent. Such yogis do not speak of their experience in public, nor even in private to several persons in company, nor do they give any answer even to a direct question.

The best way to get something of value from them is to sit down among their few disciples or bhaktas (devotees or admirers) far into the night; when the latter will begin to go away, one by one, there will remain, with the yogi, only a very few. Then the yogi may be, often is, in a mood to relate something of his life and experience; we should never interrupt him, nor express any doubt; it is always better only to listen to what he wishes to say. Thus only can we have something of value from him.

I will not disturb the reader, nor the scholar, nor the savant, nor even any reverend monk, with my humble experience within these some forty or fifty years; they may sound rather a long period, but the experience gained or acquired during this period is nothing more than what any one of us can achieve in a matter of days or weeks in serious meditation and earnest thought or insight...May the Master bless and render help to us all!

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The Buddha's System of Meditation

PHASE TWO

THE FOUR FORMLESS TRANCES

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in Ānāpāna. Evaluation of Practice. Memory of Body and Movement. Knowledge of Action. Disagreeable Contemplation. Observation of Elements. Observation of Disagreeable Parts. Thirty-two Trances. A Critical Study. Observation of Dead Body. A Revival Method of Contemplation.

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I

Introduction

Manifestation and Sphere of Trance

MEDITATION HAS always been regarded as an important means of discovering a fresh and effective method to realise the goal of human supreme inner striving. Whether as religious conviction or philosophical introspection, Buddhism in its earlier and purer form is found to have been mainly carved out of a system of meditation. The nucleus of this system was first developed by its original founder, the Shākya Prince Sarvārtha-siddha, shortened into Siddhārtha, Siddhattha in Pāli, who was later known successively as the Bodhisattva or 'Buddha in the making' and the Buddha, the Perfectly Enlightened one.

While he was still leading a household life in Kapilavastu now situated in the mid-western terai of Nepal, he successfully organised, under the shade of a rose-apple tree, a unique trance textually called the first jhāna or virtually the first stage of his basic meditative system. Descriptively it is noted as separate from worldly desires and evil propensities; it is said to contain pure and nominal vitakka and vicāra, or the initial and sustained application of thought respectively; it is further stated to be accompanied with joy and pleasure born of meditative seclusion. Moreover the Abhidhamma or the philosophical classification adds to it another factor, mental concentration, that is evidently

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superfluous, inasmuch as a trance is by its very nature a mental concentration.

This trance gradually and distinctly transcends the world of desires or the material plane. Then it attains what is technically recognised as the form plane or the psychic sphere of spatial brilliant forms over and above the material one. This form plane is said to constitute the subtle regions of sacred and renowned Brahmaloka above the different layers of heaven. The Brahmaloka is stated to be inhabited by beings who have performed meritorious fruit-bearing actions, or who have practised or practising this type of meditation or its equivalents, the Brahmavihāras, the immeasurable contemplations. Such subtle regions profusely spoken of in mythology and works on yoga and meditational science cannot however be located in any corner of cosmic space. Nevertheless the unmistakably direct experience of yogis and meditationists including the Buddha and his disciples corroborates the existence of such a region. It appears to be as real to them as the material world does or is to us. In short such a trance is the nucleus of the Buddha's meditative system that we are trying to epitomise.

Positive Experience

The novelty of this trance appears to us to be its very simplicity, automatic graduation and climbing upward, and ultimately merging into a reportedly inexpressible state of Nibbāna, the summum bonum of Buddhism. This last stage or state has been ever since regarded as one incapable of being positively comprehended or expressed. Negatively viewed, it is stated to be devoid of any concept whatsoever. Meditatively realised, it is however found to be far from any nullity, void, or cipher, as is philosophically imposed upon it.

As a matter of fact Buddha and his adept disciples organised and maintained such a state as lasted on occasions for seven days at a stretch. From their experience we gather that they had during this period totally ceased to feel, perceive, and be conscious of anything whatever physical or psychic, bodily or mental, outer or inner. Mindless, insensate, and unfelt they were able anyhow to keep up their poise in the Nibbānic state

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with their identity and existence latently intact. A sort of explanation for such an enigmatic phenomenon or experience may be sought in the mental contents obtaining in this type of meditation, before and after its organisation, from the very first trance onward to its last terminus in Nibbāna.

The very first Suttas or Discourses, Brahma-jāla of the Dīgha and Mula-pariyāya of the Majjhima Nikāyas or the Collections of Longer and Medium Discourses respectively, amply point out the assertion made and conclusion derived in the preceding paragraphs. The well-known non-committal position as regards several main metaphysical questions adopted and held by the Buddha naturally stems from the Nibbāna-oriented frame of mind maintained in the Buddha's meditative system specially from the first trance, through the successive stages, to the final immersion into the Nibbānic Deep. These two Suttas deal, among other things, with the gist of the Buddha's method of Nibbānic orientation or keeping oneself entirely aloof from physical and psychic objects and subjects, while meditating or cogitating over them. This aloofness or distraction is notably discernible in almost every meditative and cogitative practice taught by the Buddha.

Cultivation of Non-attachment

Thus in the popular practice of observing respirations, textually called ānāpāna sati or memory of in and out-breathing, one is taught to remember their movements constantly but unconcernedly without attaching oneself to anything connected with them. Similarly we find the same precept in the practice of observing the bodily components and states of decomposition. The same vein runs throughout the famous and consolidated practice of observing the body, the feeling, the mind, and the dhammas or the rest of the mental formations and concomitants. This practice is fully given in the Sati-paṭṭhāna Suttas of the above-mentioned two Nikāyas.

But this aloofness is most prominent in the practice of organising the first jhāna. In this jhāna or trance one loses the concept of material bodies and views them as mere spatial forms. These forms gradually separate themselves, during the course of meditation, from their material prototype or shape, and then

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rise and appear before one in brilliant colours and picturesque shapes. Such a pattern of lightly palpable forms gives birth to accompanying joy and pleasure, transforming it into the form plane. The method of bringing about such a fine state is evidently a speciality which the Buddha is not unnaturally proud of having discovered all by himself. Moreover, it is a principal key to open every recess of meditational possibilities, supernormal powers, and philosophical insights in the field of Buddhistic esoterism and intuitional flights.

No Clue to Device

The Shākya Prince however has unfortunately not left any clue, in his autobiographical reminiscences, to preliminary devices resorted to by him in organising this trance. Most probably even as an initial help or contrivance, he made the means the end or the end the means and never utilised any extraneous device usually practised before and after his time. Neither is there any mention of devotional prayers offered, nor religious formulae or incantations repeated, nor so called kasiṇas or disks prepared and concentrated on by him. Neither do we find him contemplating on metaphysical subjects, nor cogitating over philosophical abstractions as stepping-stones to his trances and supernormal surveys and reviews.

This absence of preliminary devices being mentioned as preparatory to his first jhāna gave rise to later speculations. Savants have tried to find some substitutes out of an already existing treasury of Kammaṭṭhānas or contrivances for meditation. One can plead for any one of them as a preparatory device; but without definite textual support the pleading or the substitute would not fulfil our purpose. For any wrong replacement might mislead us in organising a fundamental trance. Such is really the case with the probable replacements ostensibly made by erudite savants such as Buddhaghosa and Aśvaghoṣa. The former has given the observation of respirations, while the latter has suggested the thinking over the origin and destruction of the world. Both these preparatory steps are laudable in their respective practices; but as a preliminary device to the Buddha's first trance, they are not very reliable. The first device cannot lead one to the form plane as quickly and naturally as

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it was in the case of the Shākya Prince, while the second device does not generally precede the first trance, but rather succeeds it as a review over its import. Thus we ought to be careful of not being misguided even by dazzling names.

The Prince's or the Bodhisattva's or Buddha's reminiscence of this trance discloses that he remembered it years after vividly enough to distinguish its principal factors from his other mental overgrowth overtaxed with dogma and austerity complex. The little we can gather from his scanty remarks may be pieced together to show that his temperament and disposition tended towards a profound distraction away from the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. It is the most important qualification, according to the philosophy of yoga and his own oft-repeated dictum, making one fit to achieve the highest goal in meditation. It is therefore not strange that he should have been able to discover a unique path not trodden till then by any being divine or human.

Vitakka and Vicāra

There are five principal factors as described elsewhere above, out of which the most important for our purpose are the first two factors, viz., vitakka and vicāra. Their importance is due to the fact that they play so leading a role in our everyday life and prevent a trance from attaining higher stages. These two factors are even made to differentiate trances with vitakka and vicāra from the rest without these two, technically sa-vitakka sa-vicāra and a-vitakka a-vicāra respectively.

Thus all the higher stages of trance fall in the category of trance without vitakka and vicāra. But these two factors are the only vehicles employed by us for the purpose of thinking over diverse subjects requiring the use of language to form their concept.

When Nāgasena and Buddhaghosa take vitakka as the initial application of thought, these savants seem not to be clear about its practical meaning themselves. For their simile implies an initial moment only and the rest of thought or thinking duration falls entirely within the sustained application of thought. The latter is the function of vicāra. Therefore there is not much scope for vitakka in thinking. But this is contrary to our everyday experience, inasmuch as most of our thinking is conducted

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through language, that is, vitakka. In this respect, the 42nd sūtra of the first part of the *Yoga-sūtra* and its commentary by Vyāsa are much clearer and come nearer to what we find in a relative text in Pāli, the Dvedhā-Vitakka, or bifurcated vitakka, sutta and the Vitakka-Saṇṭhāna, or the nest of vitakka, sutta. These two discours s are the 19th and 20th suttas of the first part of the *Majjhima-Nikāya.* The commentary on these suttas covering thirteen pages also indicates that vitakka is carried on through language or mental speech, while the above-mentioned portion of the *Yoga-sūtra* and the commentary specify that the trance accompanied with vitakka oscillates among the word, its objects and the knowledge or knowing thereof. In such a context the stipulation of the initial application of thought seems to be vague, obscure, and confusing.

Non-clarification

Consequently we cannot solely depend on the interpretation of the commentary and non-canonical works alone. It appears that the older tradition of the earlier Buddhism had disappeared by the time these works were composed. This supposition may explain why Buddhaghosa fails to give us any picture of rūpāvacara or form trance in the *Visuddhi-magga* or any of his commentaries. He seems himself to be confused or reticent about what the form trance is like, when it manifests itself. Similarly in the whole of the *Yoga-sūtra* and the commentary the manifestation of form trance is not mentioned. We have however fully dealt with this feature in the first phase of this research.

Brief Resume Concluded

In the preceding sections we have briefly given a resumé of the main thesis of this research dealt with extensively but not in a very consolidated form. The foregoing brief resumé will presumably have aroused the interest of the reader, helped the would-be novice of meditation, and enlightened even savants with a new dimension of vision in this secret recess of Buddhism, not yet explored and brought to light in a practical way. The preceding resumé and the succeeding recapitulation of the first phase are not a mere repetition of what has been already said, but virtually a brief consolidation of relative matters brought

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out in a fresh perspective. Such a procedure could not have been adopted in the previous phase which required a full authentication with relative original portions canonical, non-canonical, and commentatorial.

Such a brief resumé and recapitulation is necessary in order to connect the form plane previously discussed with the formless plane we are going to take up in this second phase. The little we have shown in above paragraphs might have convinced the reader that the subject under research is highly technical and at the same time of paramount importance to those persons who are resolutely bent on understanding the primary basis of the Buddhistic meditative system and philosophical thinking. It is with this hope and conviction that I have ventured, after giving the above resumé, to recapitulate, briefly below, under separate sub-headings, matters already dealt with in the previous phase of this research. This will greatly facilitate the treatment and understanding of the formless plane, the organisation of formless trance, and the particulars connected with it. The method of organising this trance is further complicated with that of two types attributed to two teachers who are mentioned as having taught the Shākya Prince the doctrine and device of bringing about these two trances. We shall have to deal with the question and see whether they are identical with the Buddhistic ones or basically different from the latter.

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II

Recapitulation

Fresh Perspective

THE THESIS presented in the first phase is a consolidated whole and should be read and regarded as such for any appreciable comprehension of the subject-matter. For the sake of convenience the thesis is however divided and subdivided into sections and subsections, and further arranged under appropriate headings and subheadings. Even the introductory section forms an important part inalienable from the main thesis. The following recapitulation of the first phase is not merely a repetition or summary of what has been already said, but planned so as to give a fresh perspective on the subject.

Introductory Part in Synthesis

This part, as mentioned above, is not merely a formal preface, but an important portion containing, besides the usual prefatory features, genuine contributions to topics connected with the subject. Under its subheading, the Goal and the Aim, we have shown the reason why the earlier and purer form of Buddhism should have been based on the foundation of the meditative system, the nucleus of which was first discovered by the Shākya Prince, while he was still leading a household life in Kapilavastu. This discovery ultimately terminated in Nibbāna, the goal of the

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thesis. Its aim is to explore the successive stages constituting a coherent system of the Buddha's meditation.

'The state of Nibbāna' is easy to describe in its negative aspect, but it must have been its positive facet that entirely satisfied him in his quest after "what is the supreme good?" Consequently the aim of this research is widened to the presentation of this facet or aspect piecing together the scattered references in the Buddhistic canon and commentary.

The 'Contributing Factors' to the discovery of this nucleus must have been the long and independent tradition of the Shākyas, associated with the name of their patron sage Kapila and priestly Saint Asita Devala. The former bears the same name as the founder of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy, while the latter bears that of an ancient Vedic rishi. The independent character of the tradition is further augmented by the ready reception into the Shākyan territory of wandering ascetics, who might have exhaled an atmosphere of free-thinking therein.

'Myths and Miracles' are often overgrowths that obscure the human elements in great personages. The Buddha's autobiographical reminiscences are, however, fortunately free from such obscurity. Hence they are of immense value for our research. For we want to delineate a human Buddha organising a trance humanly attainable.

'Contributions of Nepal' to this system are indirect, partly genuine, but largely of an emotional nature. For we cannot attribute this system to a prince who was of a country, a parentage, and a tradition other than what the prince actually belonged to. This pride felt by Nepal in being the native country of the Buddha is in keeping with the general tendency found all over the world. A human Buddha connotes a human environment provided by chance by Nepal.

'Shākyan Ancestors' seem to come from the Kosala kingdom. They however founded their first settlement in a great sāk or sāl forest on the southern slope or side of the Snow Mountain of Nepal. The peculiar marriage custom among them might be likened to that of the Pāṇḍava princes. Moreover, from W.W. Rockhill's Tibetan source, it seems that a race bearing the name of Pāṇḍavas[1] inhabited the hilly reign of Nepal and made

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inroads into the Shākyan territory during the region of King Sinhahanu, the father of Shuddhodana.

'Mystery Sage Kapila' cannot be identified satisfactorily. The Pāli version does not tally with the Purāṇic one. Even Aśvaghoṣa, who makes Arāḍa Kālāma spell out something of Sāṅkhya philosophy, abstains from ascribing it to Kapila in the first canto of his work—Saundarānanda when he voices the Pāli tradition about the sage. We are however sure that a sage named Kapila was living in the Nepal terai forest in that remote age.

'Mystic Saint Asita' is important for developing the story of the Bodhisattva's descent from the Tusita heaven. It is a myth surrounded with miracles hardly digestible to the modern stomach. But he was a mystic and firmly believed in the future greatness of the newly born baby and prompted his sister's son to renounce his home and hearth then and there in the Baby's name. Obviously he was the first believer in the Buddha. His prophecy was reportedly remembered several times later by King Shuddhodana.

'Astrologers' are generally consulted and their foretelling has some effect on the people's mind. It was not very different in the then Shākyan community. It was, by the way, one of them and the sons of some among them who attended the Bodhisattva during the period of his austerities and became the foundation members of his order of monks.

'Free Thinking' is productive of discoveries. As mentioned above, the wandering ascetics holding diverse views and conducting frequent discussions might have helped to widen the atmosphere of free thinking among the people. The quest after "what is the supreme good?", to the exclusion of all other religious matters, gives us the inside views of the Bodhisattva's mind. He was certainly an avowed free thinker and remained so even after his perfect enlightenment. We are to keep this free spirit always alert when assessing dogmatic works and utterances.

'The Four Signs', old age, disease, death, and renunciation, are symbolic formulae more than historical events. This led some scholars to discredit the text recording the former as the latter. We sometimes have to admit the apparent fallacy in our sacred text and ought not to insist on its literal interpretation.

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'The Great Renunciation' of the Bodhisattva is not an uncommon event. It is a natural step open to anyone even now who is dissatisfied with the course of events and wants to seek a way out of it. Similarly the Bodhisattva smarting between two pressures, human and divine, was left with no way other than what is reverently recorded as the great renunciation. At the mature age of twenty-nine years, the Bodhisattva must have first been aware of his social responsibilities to take an abrupt step to shirk them. The accounts recorded in the *Lalita-vistara* till his renunciation show that the divine agencies were growing restive at his tarrying in the inner palace, but it was really at his steady progress in meditation and insight. They were all against his intention of achieving any mastery over these two mediums to perfect knowledge, while leading a household life. It has come down from the long past as a matter of principle that the highest goal should be practised and achieved only in a state of mendicancy or renunciation. So we learn from orthodox texts that the arhatship[2] of the Buddhistic order is only possible in a monk's garb. Hence the divine agencies or the orthodox subconscious of the Bodhisattva himself prevailed over him and his great renunciation ensued in the quest of the Supreme Good that turned out to be Nibbāna.

First Trance to Third Knowledge

This is the principal section of the introductory part. The method of organising this unique trance has been fully discussed in the main thesis. But the background, authentic reference, and other allied particulars concerning this trance have been incorporated in this introductory section. Hence it is not merely a preface to the subject, but an inalienable part of the subject. Specially in the field of yoga or meditation, any novice or savant ought to be quite sure of the genuineness of its source, description and related matters, in order that he or she should be able to achieve the goal, by directing his energy single-mindedly towards it.

'Buddha's Autobiography', as given in several suttas of Nikāyas in Pāli Tipiṭaka and in a few chapters of *Lalita-vistara* and in some places of the *Mahāvastu-avadāna*, relates his organising of this trance casually but successfully in his home-

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land before his renunciation. The autobiography is found in accounts, some short and some long, as his own early reminiscences recounted by himself on appropriate occasions.

'Two Teachers' are invariably mentioned in these accounts who are said to have taught the doctrine and device of organising the two types of formless trance resembling those of the Buddha's system in some particulars. His dissatisfaction at these two types of trance shows that they were intrinsically and substantially different from those of their later development assimilated by him in his system. This verity, however, is lost sight of by the commentators of the relative text.

'Their Doctrines' would have been interesting to us, if they were preserved even as scantily as those of six oft-repeated schools of the then current philosophy. It is strange that the well renowned poet Aśvaghoṣa should make, without any textual authenticity in the Buddhistic canon, Arāda Kālāma expound to the Bodhisattva the Sānkhya philosophy from the 16th to the 42nd stanzas in the 12th canto of his poetic work, *Buddha-Carita*. Later on from the 45th to the 67th stanzas in the same canto the poet makes, without any canonical corroboration, the same teacher tell the Bodhisattva a mixed device resembling that of the Buddhistic one, concluding it in the last four stanzas strangely enough, with the Sānkhya ideal of liberation. This again shows that we cannot depend on any unauthenticated opinion of even dazzling personalities.

The 'Austerities' practised by the Bodhisattva were the time-honoured ones which he could not have tried as a house-holder. The long and fruitless penance however disillusioned him of its utility. The restraining of breath is worthy of notice. This is also a time-honoured practice. If done judiciously, it cleanses and clarifies the organs of perception and enables the mind to grasp the psychic medium firmly. But he exceeded the judicious limit by trying to restrain his respiration forcibly and that for unduly lengthy periods at a stretch. It is no wonder that we do not find this important practice in the Buddhistic devices. The observation of respiration is a sort of contemplation and not a proper prāṇāyāma or retention of breath. He next resorted to fasting, a time-honoured penance, only to be discarded in the

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end. So in Buddhistic discipline we do not come across any rule for fasting as well.

'Remembrance' of the first trance organised by him under the shade of a rose-apple tree in the farming field of Kapilavastu is very important for research into the Buddha's meditative system. Were it not met with in his reminiscences, we would have to depend more or less on the commentary and non-canonical works and that would have been a pity.

'Nāgasena on Austerities' voices an independent opinion of his own in the Questions of King Milinda. The promise of Māra to the Bodhisattva on the eve of the latter's renunciation is generally believed to be true, but Nāgasena's opinion falsifies it.

'Legend of Māra' is a mystery in the Buddha's life. We cannot brush it off as a mere fanciful story. For while he was the Bodhisattva and also later when he became the Buddha, he was conceivably confronted by this powerful deity and his most beautiful daughters. It is worth a separate research to unravel this knotty question as regards his real intention in interfering with the Buddhistic way of life.

The 'Organisation of Trances' was rapid from the first to the fourth, when he was fully convinced of the efficacy of his earlier first trance. Thus dispelling his doubts and oscillations, he soon organised the first trance under the Bodhi tree. Normally sublimating it, he gained the second trance easily. Using similar means he attained the third trance. Likewise he gained the fourth trance. These successive stages were the natural outcome of the earlier and original first trance. This type of trance was a state of steady, brilliantly clear and overwhelming flow of consciousness. When its overpowering phenomenon gradually subsided, it settled down in an exceptionally pure, steady, and conscious stage of the fourth trance. It might have been this mental state, of which the Buddha spoke as 'brilliant by nature" in the 5th and 6th sections of the one-item part of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.

'Two Lines of Progress' from this fourth trance are observable. One line advanced towards the attainment of three knowledges, while the other might have been in the direction of the formless trances culminating in the cessation of consciousness and feeling, that is, the state of Nibbāna. Although most of the texts mention the former, the latter would be in keeping

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with the disposition of the Bodhisattva. At any rate the direct realisation of the last or third knowledge is possible only in the cessation of consciousness and feeling.

'The Three Knowledges' are the remembering of one's own past lives, of other persons' past lives and the gaining of direct insight into the perfect liberation. The logical sequence of the past lives fully known would have an investigation into their causal connections, which is provided by a well-known causal chain of ever-revolving 12 links technically termed dependent origination. The theory of rebirth unquestionably accepted in these knowledges will not be so unpalatable to our modern taste, if we keep it in mind that the Buddhistic theory of rebirth is quite different from the general notion about it.

'The Third Knowledge' is evidently beyond our immediate concern. The Buddha himself used to touch on this subject for a select audience, on an appropriate occasion, and that sparingly. But this knowledge which sets one directly free from the bondages in which we are ensnared must have been really astonishing.

'Metaphysical Questions' are not philosophically dealt with in the Pāli canon and commentary. The Buddha generally showed his unwillingnese to discuss these topics. But he has occasionally shown that each one of them has several facets to be considered and that each is without a definite conclusion and that each fulfils no fruitful purposes.

Philosophy of Buddhism

In this section I have tried to show that the Buddha's thinking is not in line with our modern pattern of philosophy. The Bodhisattva's goal or objective is indicated in his quest for the supreme good and its fulfilment after his Bodhi or perfect enlightenment was attained. The only proof of its attainment is his satisfaction and that of his disciples, followers and admirers. This would not probably constitute what we may regard as a philosophy conceived in logical steps and culminating in some tentative goal. The philosophy of meditation does not admit a logical proof for its verification and far less could be done so by the highest meditative system proclaimed by the Buddha.

'His Silence' on metaphysical questions logically follows from

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what has been said above. But on occasions he has explained that such questions cannot be categorically answered and discussions about them would not serve any fruitful purpose, nor be helpful to discipline, meditation, and insight.

'Our Expectation' in his superior knowledge naturally goes beyond his pronouncements and 'Some Conjectures' even unfair to the Master have arisen from time to time since then.

'His system of philosophy' can however be summed up in the all-embracing chain of dependent origination evidently developing out of the time-honoured fourfold formula of his four noble truths. The last of the four, the path leading to liberation from sorrows or bondage, comprises the likewise standard eightfold path encompassing in its turn so to say, the whole of the Buddhistic discipline, meditation, and cogitation. In short, if we are minded to set aside the most laborious and ingenuous classification in the Abhidhamma of principal items or by implication 84 thousand dhammas preached by the Buddha, we shall find only a few clear-cut tenets given below of early Buddhism.

It is realistic in outlook, so far as the material world is concerned; the world keeps moving on even after the liberated individuals' death, as in the Sānkhya philosophy; there is in it nothing immutable or eternal within and without matter and mind, excepting the uncreated state of inscrutable Nibbāna. Ethically the law of Kamma is recognised as universally operative within certain limits and not extended to such an extreme as to include each and every thing and event in the present resulting ing through past Kamma or action. Metaphysically a workable cross-section of cosmic phenomena is analysed and its conclusion derived. Psychologically the mind or consciousness is watched and described from moment to moment without the recognition of the existence of a soul. Hence the acceptance of the rebirth theory is not tantamount to that of transmigration or metempsychosis, but a logical sequence to the theory of momentary mind. Avoiding extremes, this system seeks a middle path with judicious discrimination, mainly for the convenience it would afford to lead a meditative life for the achievement of liberation through stages of supra-mundane insight. Thus viewed, Buddhism would be truly regarded as rational, ethical and mystical.

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Phases of Research

This section deals with the subject to be presented in each phase. 'The First Phase' is mainly devoted to the exposition of the first trance together with the description of the other three trances. These four trances are technically known as rūpāvacara or form plane. This plane, although discernible to and lived in by yogis or meditationists, cannot be located anywh re in the cosmic material world. The constituent of this plane is called form, because it is devoid of material qualities or at any rate is without any concept of them. It is visible or perceptible as a mere form light, spatial, clear and brilliant. The various layers of Brahmaloka or higher heaven are said to be constituted entirely of such forms.

The 'Later Phases' would include principal devices to organise the formless and other trances and contemplations. There are a few important contemplations belonging to the mid-position between the material and the form plane; these are observations of respirations, bodily components and states of decompositions. These are special contrivances to accomplish several purposes in meditation and insight. Then come supernormal powers for consideration in one of the later phases. Lastly, we have to deal with the inscrutable Nibbāna, without the treatment of which no research in Buddhism would or should be thought complete.

Original Sources

In this section we have discussed the 'Sources and Materials', which are available in extant canonical, non-canonical and commentatorial works. These are in Pāli, mixed Sanskrit and Sanskrit. Some French and English translations are valuable, as they are made from the Tibetan and Chinese texts; but they are themselves translations of original books in Prakrit and Sanskrit languages. We have at present no means to verify their authenticity other than the method employed by scholars; but such a method should be without any biased preconceptions and premeditated theories. Even in canonical texts there are clearly observable earlier and later portions, primary matters and developments, simple suttas and their consolidations, isolated sections and rearrangements. Under these circumstances, the

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task of a researcher becomes very exacting. It is not enough to collect, classify, arrange and organise the relative matter in a presentable form alone; it is also imperative to differentiate, discriminate and interpret them in consonance with more reliable versions.

Miscellaneous Matters

This section was brought in to include a few important matters needing particular attention. So under 'Text and Terms' we have given our plan of quoting authentic tenets in the original and in translation and that of using the name of works with short but adequate reference. The key to usual "Pronunciation and Transliteration" is briefly given. In the "Conclusion" at the end I have paid my heart-felt pourings in devotion from the Buddha to the Father of the Nation, the King of Nepal.

NOTES

[1]Pāṇḍavas—"The Pandava tribe . . . ", page 15, *The Life of the Buddha*, translated by W.W. Rockhill, first Indian reprint, 1972.

[2]Arhatship, the state of being an 'arhat', a liberated person. There are several types of liberated persons, but none of them will have a future rebirth. While living also, everyone of them knows that they are liberated. And, at the moment of their death, they are said to cease from all existences. From the view-point of liberation, there is said to be no difference between them. Such a liberated person is called an 'Arahā', 'Arahan' or 'Arahanta' in Pāli, while he or she is called an 'Arhat', 'Arhanta', or 'Arhā' in Buddhist Sanskrit. In mixed Sanskrit both forms are found. To avoid confusion, I have used the Sanskrit form 'Arhat'.

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III

Ānāpāna-Sati or Memory of Respiration

Objects for Meditation

ONE OF the most popular objects for meditation is the Ānāpāna Sati, or Memory of Breathings, or Observation of Respirations with constant memory. It is the same as consciousness, remembrance, or awareness of their in-and out movements. These movements are continuous and likewise felt as such. If we pay little or no attention to them, they escape our attention and hence we become unconscious of them. At the same time the flow of our conscious moments seems to be broken off in the series of objects we are conscious of. This practice of observing the movements of respiration helps to concentrate the scattered mind on the awareness of the respiratory movements. It calms the mind in a few minutes. At first one is to keep them constantly in the mind without admitting or attending to any other idea or concern. The object for meditation herein may appear to be mere materiality of the body, but in reality it is not so. The purpose is to stabilize the sati or awareness, one of the seven inner organs of Sambodhi or pure intuition. This sati or awareness is practically the flow of conscious moments or, in other words active consciousness. As such it is a mainstay of any trance and contemplation; without this awareness be-

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coming alert nothing of importance can issue from any meditation; hence it also constitutes one of the organs in the eight-fold path as Samma Sati or Right Memory.

Viewed in the isolated aspect of memory, awareness or consciousness, this sati may be looked upon as the soul of several systems of philosophy. The immutability and eternality of such a soul is forthwith denied by its very momentariness in Buddhism. Nevertheless it will be admitted that it is worth steadying and cultivating despite the controversy about its nature. Even if it be taken as an integral property of the soul, it is evident that it will not manifest itself without making it active by means of devices such as the ānāpāna sati; nor will it be cultivated without doing it as taught herein. The reverence and devotion paid to it depends upon the degree of spirituality and divinity ascribed to it in different systems of philosophy and religion. In Buddhism it is nothing more than a mere tool in meditation for transcending the successive stages of trance to be ultimately renounced in the cessation of consciousness and feeling.

Breathing Consciously

Accordingly one is taught to breathe in actively and consciously and similarly to breath out. One is to do so, while calming and tranquillising the bodily uneasiness and disturbances. The latter gradually subsides, when one does not attend to it. Then one learns to breathe in and out, while cultivating the mind towards alertness, eagerness and meditative joy. This joy motivates one to abide by one's practice and be fit to organise a trance. The Buddha teaches the disciple not to crave for or cling to anything whatsoever in the body. Thus, the Master makes this practice Nibbāna-oriented.

This device is found in several discourses of the *Sutta Piṭaka*, some in preliminary and some in developed forms. It also forms the initial section of the important *Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha* and *Majjhima Nikāyas* and Vibhaṅga of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The commentary on this sutta and vibhaṅga deals extensively with elucidatory eglends and stories.

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IV

Kāya-Gatā Sati or Memory of Body

Observing Bodily Components

THE PRACTICE of observing bodily components is one of the forty objects for meditation. It is also found in several suttas, some short and some long. It also forms a part of the four observations in the famous *Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta* and *Vibhaṅga*. It is also highly spoken of in the *Dhamma-Pada* that can be likened to the *Gitā* in Sanskrit. At present this practice will be, I am afraid, little appreciated by the sophisticated readers. In the Buddha's time this kammaṭṭhāna must have been widely practised by their monks, their colleagues and students. The emphasis put on this practice indicates the extent to which the people of that remote age were affected with the delusion of the ego or the soul.

One is taught to mark, or notice, or observe the thirty-two components of one's own body, viz., hair (both on the head and on the body), nails, teeth, skin,...urine; such an observation was calculated to give one a sense of disagreeability to one's own body, the body full of filth and disgusting matter and nauseating materials. Consequently the body would be abhorred constantly by one who bears it. The different and isolated components of the body would impress one with a conviction that the body is

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devoid of an ego or a soul. In addition the abhorrence felt for it would remove any craving for it perceived or conceived as 'it is mine', as 'it is me', or as 'it is my ego or soul'. Thus this practice played an important role in disseminating the Buddhistic tenet of non-ego in a convincing manner among its followers. It is also called the Koṭṭhāsa Bhāvanā, or Contemplation of Parts.

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V

Asubhā Bhāvanā or Disagreeable Contemplation

A Special Device

THIS DEVICE is a speciality of Buddhism. We often neglect to think over the vulnerability of our body. This negligence sometimes causes us greatest despair, when the inevitable visits us to our worst disadvantage. It would be far better for us to be prepared for the most disagreeable event and calamity beforehand than to live in self-complacency and ignorance thereof until its unwelcome arrival. Buddhism abounds in such provisions for the future and delights in the devices to visualize them. Modern taste and decency may be averse to such a practice, but the time spent on it will not go in vain and unrewarded. Even a little practice on such a contemplation will not fail to strengthen one's character in the desirable direction. In Buddhism this practice has been prized much for securing a distracted frame of mind, so necessary to achieve something of spiritual value.

This device is given as an important part of the bodily observation in the *Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta* mentioned before. It is counted as ten contemplations of bodily decomposition and also counted as ten among the forty Kammaṭṭhānas, fully dealt with in the *Visuddhi-magga*. Buddhaghosa stipulates many

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details, precautions, and preliminaries before visiting the cremation-ground for its contemplation. We can however stick to the principle of its method only and do away with its formalities. A dead body in any state of decomposition will have to be searched out for our contemplation; for without it we cannot visualise it properly in our imagination. Moreover, we have to bring home the idea of bodily putrefaction in a realistic manner and to apply the same to our own body. I do not consider such a practice to be detrimental either to our bodily constitution or to our general health.

The method of applying the idea to our own body is, in short, like this. The dead body is to be evenly and clearly looked at from a little distance; thereby we shall get an idea of the object before us; the perceived object will form a concept in our mind; any one of the meditative tools—a percept, a concept, or an idea—will be mentally applied to our own body. The application is to be repeated as many times as one is minded to do so. The repetition will bring the idea realistically to one's own body and mind, without any kind of mental speech or expression. What we are attempting to do is to grasp the entire situation with our body and mind, not through any deliberation. Such a practice will bring the whole situation so vividly before us, that we shall have a full conviction of the body being subject to that situation. There are two bodies, one is an object for meditation, the other is our own for application; the method of application is mental; the tools are not the indirect but the direct means of perceiving the dead body, its idea or concept, and applying it to our own body. In the meantime we should not be afraid of any untoward happening; doubt may sometimes arise, but will subside soon; a yogi or yogāvacara should never hesitate to practise a device, nor oscillate during his practice, because of some fanciful misgiving about it.

The vivid and elaborate details of the different states of the dead body given in the Buddha's precept give one the impression that he himself must have practised this Kammaṭṭhāna for a long time before his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.[1] There is even a hint, in W.W. Rockhill's[2] Tibetan source, at the Prince's resorting to a cemetery, or rather a cremation-ground in Kapilavastu and observing the dead and decaying bodies. He

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writes at page 23 of his work, *The Life of the Buddha* thus: "So to divert him (the Prince) he (Shuddhodana) sent him to a village to look at the ploughmen." (p. 22)... "Then, seeing a shady jambu-tree on one side, he sat down at its foot and gave himself to earnest meditation; and there his father found him, and lo! the shade had not moved from where he was." (p. 23). This earnest meditation was the first jhāna according to several original texts. Then he writes, "Shortly after (the Prince) went into the cemetery (cremation-ground?) of Rajagriha [a certain locality near Kapilavastu?] and saw the dead and decaying bodies, and a great grief filled his heart, and there his father found him." (p. 23). This short reference shows that the practice on dead bodies was not unknown to the Prince before his renunciation.

The preceding practice of observing the bodily components would seem more likable than this disagreeable one. But its rigour and severity would be much less, when we compare it with the Bodhisattva's terribly austere practice or penance recounted to Sāriputta by the Master himself in the Smaller Lion's Roar Discourse, the 11th sutta of the *Majjhima nikāya*. We cannot expect easy nice, devices only in most practices. Some may be harder and fiercer than our expectation, because of our tendency to ignore this actively cultivable facet of our spirituality or divinity. If we idolise him on account of his possessing certain likable qualities, we shall find that those were the fruits of some hard practices undertaken and accomplished by him. This disagreeable Kammaṭṭhāna is one of them.

In spite of Buddhaghosa's reservations and warnings, this practice is worth undertaking even for an experiment. For once visualized or realised, a novice becomes a yogāvacara and a yogi and an earnest candidate to the highest goal of human life. Accordingly the Master has, in many discourses, differentiated Nibbāna into several categories. In non-technical words they are attainable through meditative endeavour, intellectual deliberation, and total distraction from worldly pleasures. The last, but not the least, means is often regarded as the most efficacious one befitting the oriental idea of liberation. Hence such disagreeable Kammaṭṭhānas should not be disregarded or ignored

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by lovers of meditation. There are many legends and stories in the Canon and Commentary, when men and women under exacting and calamitous circumstances have resorted to them and found and declared the attainment of solace before their demise. They might have spoken the truth at their last gasp.

NOTES

[1]Bodhi tree—This is the tree, beneath which the Bodhisattva obtained the Bodhi knowledge. This is a 'peepal' or 'asvattha' tree in Bodhagayā. It is said that a Buddha obtains his perfect enlightenment beneath a tree. The tree is then called the Bodhi Tree of the Buddha concerned. It is also that the Bodhi Tree sprouts up at the time of the birth of the Bodhisattva.

[2]W.W. Rockhill's *The Life of the Buddha*...Derived from Tibetan works...Translated by W.W. Rockhill, p. 23. Ploughmen, ibid., p. 22. There his father found him—ibid., p. 23.

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VI

Satipaṭṭhāna or Cultivation of Memory :A Study of Method

Practical Significance

THIS IS an important discourse given in the 10th sutta in the first part of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. There is also an identical discourse, *Mahā-Sati-Paṭṭhāna*, with a little enlargement of the section on Sorrow, in the *Dīgha-nikāya*. Its version is found in other two Nikāyas as well. A separate chapter on it, *Sati Paṭṭhāna Vibhanga*, exists in the second book of the Abhidhamma. The commentary on the sutta and vibhaṅga is extensive and full of legends and stories. It is highly spoken of even by the Buddha himself. He says that anyone contemplating it in the morning may attain a supramundane insight by the evening, or that anyone contemplating it in the evening may attain a supramundane insight by the (following) morning. Such a quick and sure method of gaining an insight into the supramundane realisation and knowledge can nowhere so expressly and avowedly be found. When we remember that this insight is intellectually of the highest category in Buddhism, the Buddha's pronouncement is very significant. The clue to this wondrous guarantee is to be detected in the poise of aloofness and distraction to be maintained throughout the whole contemplation. But

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it is not difficult to see that this practice was a consolidation of several important devices taught singly and separately also.

A Reflection

The importance of this precept can be imagined by one who may find time enough to read the whole commentary full of legends, stories, similes, and instances, besides profuse expositions and explanations. This sutta with its commentary would be enough to understand the main line of Buddhistic contemplation tending from every point of attack to the supramundane insight or liberation. It might be at present out of tune to harp on liberation as understood to be striven after in a practical way by all the aspirants of the spiritual goal in total disregard of and indifference to social duties and material advancement. It can then be imagined why later Buddhism developed the ideal of a Bodhisattva to an extreme. Such an ideal was a logical sequence to the Buddha's own birth-stories invariably depicting his endeavour to mature the immature in him. If the Bodhisattva or the 'Buddha in the making' had already developed the qualities necessary to and befitting the perfect Buddha, we should have also found him in a more worldly garb than we actually find him in texts and commentaries.

Rajja Sutta and Mara

The legend of Māra[1], if it be true in its essence, would certainly fall in with our not unjustifiable wish that the World-Teacher should have at least desisted from instructing the intelligentsia totally to ignore the world. We would not have, of course, played the Māra, but none could have blamed us if we played the Brahmā persuading the Master to turn his divine eyes towards the suffering humanity seeking not only spiritual but also material remedy to their ever-aggravating ailments. However, the Master does not seem to have been indifferent to such a remedy. For there is a stray or surviving short 'Rajja' sutta in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, wherein we find the Master deliberating once on the possibility of ruling over the world without physical punishment and weapons. The ever-interfering Māra appeared from nowhere before the Master and, lauding his

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deliberation, offered him his help. This suggestion was taken as fundamentally evil and elicited a strong reprimand to him from the Master.

Legend about Kuru Country and People

To resume the subject, the sutta was preached to the monks, when the Master was staying in a great forest near a town of the Kuru Princes in the far west. The commentary has an interesting legend concerning these Kuru people inhabiting the country. It was at the time of the victory march of King Mandhātu that the people from the mythical Northern Kuru followed the King's retinue and came over there. The town was named Kammāsadamma after Kammāsa-pāda, the name of a Porisāda, or rākṣasa, or titan, who was controlled there. It was also called Kamāsa-dhamma because of Kammāsa or defilement arising there in the dhamma or rules of the Kuru people. The former name would appear to be mythologically correct, inasmuch as a certain king became, through a curse, a rākṣasa and bore the name of Kalmāsa-pāda killed by his former royal brother Sudāsa; the story is found in the first part of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It shows some agreement between the Pāli and Sanskrit traditions that may sometimes help our conjecture in filling a gap. The legend was given here as a prelude to an interesting reflection on the intellectual capacity of the Kuru people recorded in the commentary as follows:

Eulogy of Kuru Clergy and Laity

The Master preached this sutta showing a singularly effective path here, because of these people's capacity to grasp the meaning of the significantly deep teaching. Because of suitable nutrition, the clergy and the laity are always sound in body and mind. On account of their soundness in body and mind endowed with the power of intellect, they are capable of comprehending the deeply significant discourse. For this reason the Master preached this seriously meaningful discourse formulating kammaṭṭhāna at twenty-one places or arhatship or the ultimate stage of supramundane insight and knowledge, the Discourse of Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta. Finding the assembly of the inhabitants of the Kuru country, the Master preached not only this serious

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discourse but also several other deeply significant discourses, such as Mahā-nidāna, Mahā-sati-paṭṭhāna of the *Dīgha*, and Sāropama, Rukkhū-pama, Raṭṭhapāla, Māgandiya, Ānañja-sappāya of the *Majjhima-nikaya* and others.

Moreover in this place all the four assemblies of the followers of the Buddha become naturally engaged in contemplating the Sati Paṭṭhāna. Even the slaves, workers, and servants tell tales connected with the Sati Paṭṭhāna. Not only the human beings in this place do this, but also the beasts and birds. The story is given of the young parrot named Buddha-rakkhita, which was contemplating a skeleton kammaṭṭhāna, while being carried away through the air in the talons of a bird of prey.

This is enough to show that this sutta is regarded as one of the most important suttas in the canon and the commentary. It also lends support to our supposition that this sutta is a consolidation of several other important devices described in separate suttas. The consolidation might have been made by the Master himself as otherwise the guarantee of quick attainment mentioned above could not have been recorded so prominently at the end of the sutta. Nevertheless the high credit and eulogy paid in the commentary to the people of the North-Western country in preference to other important places and inhabitants, such as Magadha, Kosala, Kāsi, Vesāli, Mithilā or Videha, etc., are worth critical consideration, specially when the sutta itself says nothing about such a qualification of the Kuru people and country.

A Probable Consolidation

The consolidatory characteristic of this discourse is unmistakably discernible in the multiplicity of kammaṭṭhānas included herein. There are altogether forty-four kammaṭṭhānas in the text, fourteen connected with the observation of the material body, nine with that of the feeling, sixteen with that of the mind, and five dealing with that of the dhammas or principal Buddhistic categories. The commentary, counting the practices on the feeling and the mind as two only, makes the total number twenty-one. This is the number given in the commentary as twenty-one places of gaining arhatship. If we count the nine states of bodily decomposition as one item of observation,

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the total number will be only thirteen. But it is generally mentioned as the Four Observations of the Body, the Feeling, the Mind, and the Dhamma. Since the last one includes the Four Noble Truths as well, it will alone encompass the whole of early Buddhism. Textually also this sutta served as a compendium of contemplations for recitation before adepts, savants, and well-versed monks and laymen for the benefit of listeners as well. Its recitation even helped some adept disciples to get relief from the severity of their illness. Some interesting instances of such relief are provided in the *Sati Paṭṭhāna Samyutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, one of them concerning the Master himself. The Master was suffering from some severe illness and wanted the sutta to be recited before him. After listening to its recitation, he said, "Verily it is so" and the severity forthwith disappeared.

Two Types of Reminiscences

The Buddha's reminiscences can be classified broadly into two categories, one before his enlightenment and the other after it. His reminiscence concerning this contemplation is of the latter category and found in the *Magga-sutta* or the discourse on the Path, the 43rd sutta of the *Sati Paṭṭhāna Samyutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*. The sutta runs as follows: The Buddha was once staying in Sāvatthi. There he addressed the monks, "One time, O Monks, I was passing the time, recently enlightened, under the Ajapāla Banyan Tree near the bank of the Nerañjarā river. To me, O Monks, absorbed in meditation in a secluded place, it occurred in the form of mental deliberation that there is a single path for the purification of beings, for the transcending of sorrows and lamentation, for making pain and dejection vanish, for the gaining of knowledge, and for the realisation of Nibbāna, the path that is the Four Sati Paṭṭhānas." There and then the Brahmā Sahampati from the subtle region of heaven appeared before the Master and supported him in his deliberation, "It is so, Lord; it is so, Sugata." By the way, in another sutta called the Sahampati Brahmā-sutta, we are informed that this Brahmā was formerly a monk under the previous Buddha Kassapa and that his name was then Sahaka; after this name he was called in the subtle region also Sahampati. It was this

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Brahmā who had requested and persuaded the Shākya Munī or our present Buddha to preach the dhamma he realised under the Bodhi tree. Such supernatural elements abound in Buddhism and cannot be eliminated without losing some important clues.

Salient Features

The full treatment of these four observations would need a separate thesis. Here we can dwell only on its salient features, elucidating its practical aspect and method. It is however a systematic series of contemplations and obviously not of trances. One can, of course, take up any one of the kammaṭṭhānas given in this sutta and concentrate on it, producing some stage or other of the trance. For example, the 4th kammaṭṭhāna of the first observation on the body, summarised above under the sub-heading Kāya-gatā Sati, has thirty-two components or ingredients, such as hair (both on the head and on the body), nails, teeth,...urine. On each ingredient one can contemplate and may even obtain a stage of trance. We find in the *Visuddhimagga* an instance of the first trance organised by an adept monk on each of the thirty-two ingredients of this kammaṭṭhāna. A resolute meditationist can do things that may seem impracticable to a novice. The commentary on this Sati Paṭṭhāna Vibhaṅga in the *Abhidhamma* has devoted 27 pages in the Sinhalese script, treating of each ingredient extensively. Such disagreeable objects for meditation had once created a calamitous situation among some practising monks, when the Master was living in a lonely cell for a fortnight.

Method of Anapana in Bodily Observation

The first of the four observations is termed the Kāyānupassanā, or the constant observation of the body. It begins with the ānāpāna sati summarily dealt with above under a separate subheading. The main principle of this practice, as has been said therein, is the generating and maintaining of consciousness on the support of respiration. Through this practice the reflexive, involuntary, or passive movement of respirations gradually becomes active and voluntary, that is, we begin to breathe in and out by our own efforts.

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This helps us to keep up, from moment to moment, our memory, remembrance, awareness, or consciousness in a continuous flow or series. This conscious flow checks the mind from straying out of our control and automatically tames it to follow the respiratory movements. These movements in themselves are not very significant, but the awareness of each and every moment of such a movement is most important from the meditational point of view. It is necessary for organising a trance.

The practice of observing respirations is not difficult. It is not prāṇāyāma or the retention of breath. It is simply a calm, quiet and easy breathing in and out with awareness of this action. It is also unlike the practice and imagining the respiration as an automatic recitation of Soham or Hamsa, meaning 'That am I' corresponding to 'That thou art' in another yogic system. For no incantation, vocal or mental, real or imaginary, visual or conceptual, is recited, repeated, or even entertained in the mind. Hence a doubt may legitimately arise in the mind of a novice, whether such a meditation is of merit or of value. The Buddha has defined such a doubt as one of the five Nivaranas or impediments to meditation. The rest of the impediments are desire, dislike, laziness and torpor, frivolity or fidgetting and morose penitence. All these impediments hinder the smooth flow of consciousness or conscious moments by diverting, repelling, smothering, scattering, and oscillating such a conscious flow. It is neither a mere quietism nor a volatile attempt at concentration. It is a poise established after calming the bodily discomfort and cultivating the mental factors and concomitants at each out-flow and in-flow of respiration.

In the Padīpopama, or the Simile of the Burning Lamp, the 8th discourse of the Ānāpāna Samyutta of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, we find a high compliment paid to this practice by the Master. He says, "I also used to pass, O Monks, the time often by this vihāra before my enlightenment when I was still a Bodhisatto. While passing the time often by this vihāra, neither my body ached, nor did the eyes. And not craving and clinging to anything, my mind was liberated from the āsavas (the fundamental defilements)."

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An Episode

There are in all the four *Nikāyas* several discourses describing this contemplation. One of these suttas is worth mentioning here to show its efficacy as an antidote to a frame of mind resulting from disagreeable observations. It is the Vesāli Sutta, the 9th discourse of the above-mentioned *Ānāpāna Samyutta*. The Master was once staying in the Kūṭāgāra Sālā of the Great Forest in Vesāli. The Master was then preaching to his disciples on the asubha-kathā, or the disagreeable topic. Then, as was his general practice in the sojourn for the rainy season, he told the monks that he was resorting to a solitary cell for half a month for meditation, and that none of them should approach him excepting an alms-bearing attendant.

Probably the disagreeable topic was differently received and understood. It so happened that some monks, hating the body for its repulsive nature, were searching for somebody bearing arms to put an end to such a loathsome body.[2] A former slaughterer was found among them who served them with the end they sought at his hands. Lauded and encouraged by the Māra, the scapegoat for all the conceivable evil designs, the killer roamed about inviting to give those monks who wanted it an expeditious separation from this loathsome body. Some were scared and some were not. Thus isolated cases of depreciation increased to a calamitous magnitude. It is recorded in the sutta that in one day ten, twenty and even thirty monks welcomed decapitation at the hand of the killer.

There are twelve kammaṭṭhānas or objects for meditation that are apparently disagreeable to our customary taste. They are the observation of the body's components, the perception of gross food, and the ten states of the body's decomposition after death. The purpose of such disagreeable objects recommended for meditation seems to be to remove the liking for and attachment to the physical body we possess. This episode of voluntary destruction of life is, to all appearances, anfortunate and unforeseen; but the commentary of the Vinaya Pāṭaka on the third Pārājika or excommunication tries to absolve the Master's preaching from any blame. But the attempt of the commentator in doing so is far from being satisfactory and justifiable. He says: "In the past there were five hundred professional hunters

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who together lived. . by killing birds and beasts throughout their life. These hunters went to hell... after death and... were born... as men. All of them were initiated and ordained in the Master's Order."

"The Master saw that their...former evil-rooted action...was seeking to find the opportunity of destruction of (their) life through their (own or others' efforts within that fortnight. The resultant of (former) action cannot be set aside by anyone whosoever...Now the Master thought: 'These (monks of such approaching destiny) will not be able to purify (their destiny), because they are terrified of death due to (their) attachment to the (conception of) self. Well, I shall preach them Asubha-kathā (disagreeable sermon)for the abandonment of attachment. Listening to this (discourse) they will (be able to) take their birth in heaven. Thus (their initiation into my order will be purposeful.

"Hence the Master preached the disagreeable sermon...for their benefit, not with the intention of praising the dying." So far the commentator is laudable. But, when he further says that the purpose of the Master's seclusion for this fortnight (of slaughter) was virtually his unwillingness to interfere with the course of impending events, we might truly wonder at his inability to foresee the outraged sentiment of posterity.

The Master came out of his seclusion at the end of the period. Seeing the reduced number of monks, he asked Ānanda, the attendant monk, about the cause and learned from him the situation. The sutta obviously abstains from giving us a hint at the Master's sentiment of dismay at such an untoward course of events. Expeditiously, however, he assembled the surviving monks and preached to them a sermon on the Ānāpāna Sati. He explained that the Ānāpānassati Samādhi, or the trance on the memory of respiration, when contemplated on and increased or developed, becomes soothing, elegant, and plesant.

The Master and Anapana

The Icchānaṅgala Sutta, the 11th discourse of the same *Samyutta*, gives us the important piece of information that the Master passed the three months of the rainy season mostly in this meditation. It was when he was staying in the forest grove of Icchānaṅgala. There he expressed to the monks his wish to

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be engaged in meditation in a solitary cell for the three months of the rainy season. During this period, he said, none should approach him excepting an alms-bearing attendant. When the Master came out of his seclusion at the end of the period, he informed the monks that he passed the rainy sojourn mostly in the Ānāpānassati Samādhi. If others asked them about how their Master passed his rainy sojourn, he said that they should give others the same piece of news.

Cessation of Breathing

This practice appears to have been mostly exercised in a sitting posture, although it is not impossible in other positions, especially in the lying down one as well. In the developed form it is extended, in the Master's precept to Rāhula, up to the limit of the cessation of breath. It is generally held that the respiration ceases in the fourth stage of form trance. Since the breathing in this device implies a parallel flow of conscious moments, the ceasing of respiration may also imply the cessation of consciousness. Neither the above precept nor the fourth stage of form trance defines this state as the final one in the series of nine successive trances through the four form and four formless trances to the absorption in the Cessation of Consciousness and Feeling.

Nevertheless the nature of this observation indicates that such a cessation of breath may stabilise the memory of the practiser to a degree not lower than what is and can be reached in the fourth stage of form trance. But the mere cessation of breathing is not enough to visualise and realise the intervening stages of the form trance, accompanied with overwhelming joy and pleasure and other wonderful experiences. A ready reply to an inquisitive question as to why it should be so is provided in several suttas of the canon itself.

Supreme Insight

From these we gather that one may gain a supreme insight into liberation, but fail to achieve any supernormal power and to experience any meditative phenomenon. One of these suttas is Assaji Sutta, the 88th discourse of the 22th Samyutta of the *Samyutta-nikāya*. Herein a certain monk named Assaji com-

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plains before the Master that, as he could not organise a samādhi as he did earlier, he was afraid lest he slipped down (from his path to liberation). Thereupon the Master encouraged him with the remark, "Assaji! It is true only with those ascetics and Brāhmans who depend on samādhi and put faith in samādhi that they might be so afraid, but not in...Nibbāna." Obviously the Master prizes the supreme insight into Nibbāna above everything else. It must be at least a solace to all of us, the modern intelligentsia. For an insight into Nibbāna does not seem to be out of our reach, while a samādhi is not an easy thing.

To continue our discussion, the trance, which is obtaining in the final state of the stoppage of respiration brought about by constantly following it with memory, may not manifest the wondrous and rewarding phenomena of the form ecstasy. As otherwise the form trance would have gone out of vogue in the later portions of the canonical texts and in the commentary. As a matter of fact, the core of this contemplation is the stabilization of memory. This done, it has accomplished its main function and purpose. Consequently this device has not been able to replace any of the principal objects for contemplation and concentration. Although the Master has recommended this practice to aspirants of form and formless trances, he has not given to all appearances a high status to this observation. The full description of this recommendation can be read in the above *Padīpopama Sutta.*

Anapana a Misfit?

Probably it was such suttas as the above that induced Buddhaghosa to insert rather surreptitiously the Ānāpāna as the initial step the Prince Siddhārtha took in organising the first trance under the rose-apple tree in Kapilavastu. We have however shown that the insertion was a misfit and for our purpose even misleading. The same obsession is observable in Buddhaghosa's comment on the first discourse of the *Dīgha-nikāya.* Commenting on the Cūlasīla, or the lesser discipline, of the *Brahmajāla Sutta,* Buddhaghosa writes: "The sun having set, he (the Bodhisatto) dispelled Māra's forces; in the first part of the night (evening) he remembered the past lives; in the middle part of the night he purified the divine or supernormal eyesight;

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towards the dawn he brought down the knowledge to bear upon the dependent origination or causal chain utilized by all the Buddhas (in the past). He then organized the fourth jhāna (form trance) of the Ānāpāna, that is, he began observing the respirations and attending to this attained the fourth stage of form trance. Making the same trance the stepping base, he developed discriminational thought. After that through the successive paths, he gained the fourth path (the path of arhatship). Through this path he destroyed all the defilements. Ultimately he penetrated all the qualities of the Buddha."

The fourth stage of form trance can be attained, according to Buddhaghosa, on the ten Kasiṇas, Ānāpāna, and Upekkhā Brahma-vihāra. Presumably he thought that the Bodhisatto would have resorted to the easiest of the twelve devices. Hence it is merely his supposition, not found in and supported by the text. He cannot possibly conceive the organisation of form trance without an appendage such as ānāpāna and one of the kasiṇas. This explains his failure, reticence, or secrecy in delineating the characteristic of form trance and plane. As a matter of fact, according to the Buddha's early reminiscence and relative texts, the organisation of form trance appears to have been performed and accomplished without the intermediary devices, as has been amply shown in this research.

The oft-repeated formula of this form trance states that the five Nivaraṇas or impediments are the only hindrances to the first trance. When these five are once removed, the first trance is smoothly organised and maintained. There is no mention of any other devices, such as the ānāpāna, kasiṇa, etc., preliminary to the form trance in the relevant portions of the canonical texts. The kasiṇa method of Buddhaghosa itself dispenses with the ānāpāna. In reality the method of ānāpāna seems to be a separate system perfected by the Buddha, as is evident from and in several ānāpāna suttas complete to all appearances in themselves. If one rightly follows any one of these ānāpāna suttas augmented with the commentary full of instances and legends, one may perhaps need to borrow nothing more from other sources to achieve something substantial in the esoteric and intuitive Buddhism of the early type.

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Memory of Body in Motion

The next two parts of the Kāyānu-passanā or the observation of the body deal with the keeping up of the memory or awareness of the body in motion. They are the logical corollaries to and of memorizing respirations in a sitting posture. The first of them is termed Iriyā-Patha or the way of consciously directing the bodily motions towards walking, standing, sitting, and reclining or lying down. The other is called Sampajjañña or consciously doing things. These two parts complement or supplement the memory generated in the practice of ānāpāna. There are several instances and legends regarding the practice of these two methods of Sati or memory. These methods make reflex, passive, or involuntary movement, maintain and preserve one's conduct and discipline; they efficiently contribute to the stabilization of memory.

Purification of Memory

It must be understood here that the Pāli term Sati and Sanskrit Smriti, literally meaning memory, is not the mental faculty of remembering past events, but that of following the perception and conception from moment to moment with an alert memory. It may also be taken as awareness, or consciousness. The memory thus aroused and maintained in a continuous flow of conscious moments is further purified of its attachments and indiscriminate grasping and craving by means of the succeeding three parts. These are the Disagreeable Observation, Inspection of Bodily Elements, and Watching Nine Conditions of a Corpse. The first of these three has been described under the sub-heading of Kāya-gata Sati above. The second is to inspect the body in its four main elemental divisions: earth, water, fire or heat and air. These two practices make one with no mental attachment to the body and its organs and parts. The instinct or habitual conception of the identification of oneself with the body as 'I am the body' is removed by the elemental inspection. The watching of nine disintegrating conditions of a dead body and applying them to our own living body brings home a vivid realisation of the inevitable death our body is subject to and the body passing through nauseatingly loathsome states described realistically in this part of this sutta.

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Although we know these verities to be true, we do not often realise them sufficiently. It needed the Shākya Muni to devise these means for driving the truth and its moral deep into our complacent minds and hearts. We cannot escape death and its terrible clutches are made conceivable by these practices. Rightly the Master said that sorrow and suffering are the first truth. Rightly too, almost all our oriental philosophies have built their system on the foundation of this noble truth. Even in our modern conditions and ideologies, we cannot ignore this old truth without untoward consequences in the present and probably also in the future. Thus the observation of the body is said to consist of fourteen parts or sections that can be designated as six, counting the nine putrid states of the corpse as one. Because of grossness and materiality, the Kāyānupassanā contains many details and admits of close scrutiny, minute analysis, and purposive evaluation of commonly available data. Similarly the multiplicity of subjects for thinking over makes the Dhammānupasanā philosophically useful and at the same time interesting. Its thirty-three subjects are however grouped into five sections. Due to subtleness, the twenty-five items of the observation on the feeling and the mind are counted as only two.

Importance of Sati Patthana-Sutta Recitation

Thus the famous precept of four Sati Paṭṭhānas is one of the most important suttas in the Canon, and the commentary on the Text is likewise an illuminating and interesting piece of Buddhistic literature. It can be said without reserve that this sutta with its commentary alone can give a comprehensive view of the nucleus of early Buddhism in terms of meditation and insight. And the Master has not given in vain the guarantee of twelve hours to an aspirant for gaining an insight into Nibbāna, the summum bonum of both earlier and later Buddhism. The aspirant is to forget everything he has learned in other systems. He has then to read the text in the original or a translation from beginning to end, one reading at one session, several times. The commentary is not needed at this stage. Textual reading should be repeated as many times as would make the repeater confident of the textual flow, since otherwise he would

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not be able to remember the successive steps for contemplation. In those early days there were probably no books; if there were any, they were rare; it was much easier to learn and memorize the sutta by word of mouth rather than copying and consulting it. Accordingly we find, at every step, peyyāla or repetition that is so distasteful to us now. But in those times these repetitions served a dual purpose, one to give a fresh impetus to repeat the piece and the other to give attention to the contemplation of the steps of kammaṭṭhāna. In fine, repeated reading of the sutta is as necessary now as it was then. For we cannot meditate upon such a consolidated kammaṭṭhāna as the Sati Paṭṭhāna from a book, turning over leaves at each step.

This done, one should sit down upon the ground in some lonely place at any time convenient, when and where one can devote a few hours undisturbed for this practice. The flowing style of the sutta is so expressive as to defeat our attempt at any condensation. One should therefore let the sutta run on in its own leisurely and characteristic style ungrudgingly for a few days. The time will not be spent in vain. There is such an instance cited by Buddhaghosa in the commentary. He writes that there had been formerly a discussion about the word 'Ekayano maggo' among elder monks. There a monk named Tipiṭaka-culla-Nāga-thera said that the word meant the 'Pre-part Sati Paṭṭhāna Path', that is, it is a single path to Nibbāna, but its pre-part constitutes the device of Sati Paṭṭhāna. Thereupon a teacher-monk called Tipiṭaka Culla-Summa-tthera replied to him that the meaning of the word was a mixed path, that is, it is both a single path and a device. The first monk stuck to his meaning, and the second did to his. The question was not settled then and there. Later on, however, the teacher monk thought over the question and began to recite the Sutta from beginning to end. At the end he recited: "Anyone who thus contemplates the Sati Paṭṭhāna for seven years..." Over the words 'seven years' the monk began to deliberate. He thought: "There is no waiting for seven years after the supramundane path has once arisen. My answer to that question is not obtained; Culla Nāga's concept obtains." Then on the next occasion the teacher admitted his mistake to Culla Nāga and upheld

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the interpretation of the latter. Thus the revision of the Sutta helped even an adept monk to determine a difficult word-meaning.

Organisation of Contemplation

To resume our practice, we should then remember that the sutta shows us a single path for our mental purification, transcending sorrow and suffering, and gaining the superior knowledge. The path, even if a single one, is divided into four parts, viz., observations of the body, of the feeling, of the mind, and of the dhammas. We may bring the instances of many monks to mind. These monks had successfully contemplated over these four observations and gained arhatship, not only under normal circumstances, but even under unbelievably exacting ones. Besides the textual accounts, we have also some later instances in the commentary. A monk named Tissa, an inhabitant of Sāvatthi, organised the device, with his thigh broken and murderers waiting beside him. The monk gained arhatship at dawn. Another instance is singularly realistic. It was that of one of the thirty monks, in the Buddha's time, who declared his attainment of arhatship just before his heart was devoured by an overpowering tiger. Another monk named Pita-malla-tthera, who had come to Ceylon, gained arhatship even enduring a fatal wound caused by a deer-hunter's spear.

Arhatship seems to be the stabilized state after having received a direct insight into Nibbāna, or a vivid realisation of one's own complete detachment from inner and outer objects. It entails the absence of anything as 'I am, it is me or mine'. The peculiar frame of mind, generated through the Master's way of teaching, prepares, from the very outset, a monk or a novice, to be awakened in a state of non-ego corresponding to the same frame of mind obtaining throughout the four observations. No dogmatism is taught in this sutta; but the absence of attachment must be productive of such an insight or realisation. Hence the main principle of these four observations is to generate and maintain this frame of mind through an alert memory. The memory needs something as a support to remember. It is meant to be provided for in the gross or subtle objects of the body and the mind and the concomitants of the latter. It is however graduated and systematized in a way not very difficult even to a novice ancient

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or modern. We may prize arhatship or not; the practice taught and followed in this sutta is calculated to land us unawares in a mental state of non-ego.

Method of Breathing in Anapana

The practice, after the main principles given as a sort of introduction to the sutta, goes into details cursorily mentioned and discussed above. It begins with the method of arousing and keeping up sati or memory on the support of each breath in and out, "One breathes in with memory and breathes out with memory. Taking in a long or deep breath, one knows that one is taking in a deep breath. Giving out a long breath, one knows that one is giving out a long breath. Inhaling a short or shallow breath, one knows that one is inhaling a short breath. Exhaling a short breath, one knows that one is exhaling a short breath. One learns to breathe in, while observing something arising in the body; one learns to breathe out, while observing something passing away from the body." Step by step in this way one's memory is trained to grasp more and more on the support of each inhalation and each exhalation. Or, as an alternative or due to imperceptibility of respiration, one turns one's attention to the body as a whole and remembers that 'there is the body'. This memory of the body is kept alert, and that only for knowledge and remembrance. "One meditates unattached; one does not crave anything in the body. In this manner also one observes the body in this bodily observation." This is the lesson on ānāpāna in short.

Evaluation of Practice

It is evident that this practice teaches one to keep up the flow of conscious memory in a continuous moments, without attaching oneself to anything whatsoever inside or outside the body. Outwardly it is unsophisticated, but intrinsically it is significant with its deep philosophical content. The Buddhistic concept of impermanence and non-ego may be imagined to be stemming from such practices as described above. It is to be noticed that his sutta nowhere mentions any incantation to be repeated, any prayer to be offered to any deity, any worship or devotion paid to divinity, or any material or abstract concept to be cherished

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in the mind. Hence we may fairly imagine that such a unique system of meditation could have been discovered only by a superior mind enlightened to the highest degree and perfected by a similar brain of uncommon perseverance and pertinacity.

It is also noticeable that the later savants have not improved appreciably and perceptibly upon this method, in spite of sophisticated developments concerning philosophical, emotional, and devotional facets of Buddhism brought about by such erudite savants. The reason is worth investigation. The line of research may lie in the re-arrangement of so called exhaustive classifications of the books of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* and comparing them with the relevant items of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. As an example, the division of dhammas into categories of mundane and supramundane in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* has much complicated them. The purpose of demarcating their boundary would have been fulfilled with some criteria such as ego or non-ego, attachment or non-attachment, concept of permanence or that of impermanence, etc. On the other hand, the ambiguous term Rūpa should have been clearly differentiated into two categories, one denoting material objects and the other, formal phenomena above the material plane. The technical term Rūpāvacara signifying the latter but sparingly used should have been replaced by some appropriate term.

Memory of Body and Movement

By now we shall have learned to maintain memory or awareness of our respirations. At the same time we must have been also able to keep up the memory that 'the body is or exists'. In other words, we are aware of the body and do not forget that 'there is the body'. The presence of the body is tantamount to the presence of memory. Thus trained, the memory is now directed to the movement of the body. It pays attention when we walk about, stand up, sit down, and also lie down, as our need arises. So this practice termed 'Iriyā-patha' is different from, but an extension of, ānāpāna. The text of this part reads: "And again, O Monks, the monk knows I am walking, when he is walking. While standing up, he knows I am standing up. When seated, he knows, I am seated. If he be lying down, he knows, I am lying down. In whichever position the body is found,

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he knows it in those very positions". Here the knowing of the body is the remembering of it; and thus the memory of the body in motion is kept up like that of respirations. The principle of the practice is fundamentally the same in both cases. The practice of Iriyāpatha of course demands more attentive efforts than that of ānāpāna.

Knowledge of Action

The next practice, termed Sampajjañña, is still more extended than the Iriyā-patha and covers all our bodily movements and actions. It is also discriminatory and purposive. The text of this part teaches that we must be aware of each movement of our limbs. Whenever and whatever we do, we are instructed to do it with awareness and knowledge. Nothing is to be done without awareness and without knowledge. The commentary has provided us with several interesting instances of monks practising it. Such a practice is evidently useful even in our daily work. It is doubtless very helpful in organising various devices to a trance. Such a thorough method of keeping up purposive awareness would probably be found only in early Buddhism. Consequently the Buddha must be credited with inventing and systematizing the practice so thoroughly.

Disagreeable Contemplations

The next three parts, viz., Disagreeable Contemplation, Elemental Thinking and Observation of Nine Decompositions of the corpse, are more purposive than the preceding one. These devices are needed for purifying the mind of its impurities, worldly tendencies, and dispositions unfavourable to meditation and insight. We can practise the first two devices wherever we like; but the last one will require a corpse to be meditated upon. Without such an object before us, we cannot conduct this practice realistically. The text does not stipulate an alternative in its absence. The dead bodies of beasts and birds, bodies other than those of human beings, cannot serve the purpose of this practice. We have therefore to visit some cremation-grounds to find dead bodies to meditate upon. Buddhaghosa even stipulates several conditions and gives certain precautions. Some of them deserve our attention even now. For example, the dead

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body selected should be of like sex; for the opposite sex might arouse, he says, a latent desire. Further the practiser should intimate some of his friends beforehand with his intention of visiting such grounds to guard himself against some possible untoward happenings. For, although we may not entertain any superstitious fancies ourselves, we might fall prey to such fancies of other persons and be taken for goblins at unusual times of the night.

Observation of Elements

The Dhātu-manasikara or Elemental Thinking is the observing of the body as composed of four elements. The method of observing it is characteristic of the system. "The monk observes the body, this very body as placed and as set up through elements. There are, in this body, earth element, fire element, and air element." Each element is taken one by one and compared to some piece or part of the body resembling the element. It is driven vividly in the mind, by a fitting example of a butcher or the butcher's assistant, who might be seated in a street having slaughtered a cow and dividing its carcass into parts. The purpose is evidently to make one see that the body is made up of parts pertaining to different elements. The observation of the body in elemental parts makes, according to the commentary, the concept of the body as a whole vanish and that of its parts appear as different and separate entities. Thus the device of the Master does not rely upon intellectual comprehension alone, but makes sure that the truth be patent before the practiser's eyes as well; otherwise a few words in a precept might have been enough to define the body as made up of elemental parts and devoid of an ego, self or soul of its own.

Observation of Disagreeable Parts

The Paṭikkūla-manasikāra or Disagreable Observation, on the other hand, serves a dual purpose. The observation of external and internal materials and organs of the body brings their disagreeable aspects before the mind, and also the knowledge of non-ego may dawn in the mind. This device is also known as that of 'thirty-two items'. The first five items beginning with

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hairs and ending in taco or skin is termed 'tacapañcaka' or skin-five. This seems to have been used as a formula given for initial practice to a novice at the time of his initiation into the Buddhistic Order. The Brāhman Ascetic Subhadda, as mentioned in the Discourse of 'Great Passing-away' in the *Dīgha-nikāya*, was initiated at the death-bed of the Master with this formula by Ānanda, the attendant monk. The method of practising this Kammaṭṭhāna is fully dealt with in the *Visuddhi-magga* and Commentary on the Sati Paṭṭhāna Vibhaṅga of the second book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The lengthy and minute detail of the method in the commentary may be surprising to us now; but, at the time when the relative commentary was composed, the practice must have been widely abovcated by the elder members of the Order of Monks. Gradually, with the passing away of the elder members and their staunch successors, the zeal of practising this Kammaṭṭhāna must have decreased appreciably to such an extent as to make the writer of the *Visuddhi-magga* lean heavily on the kasiṇa method in preference to this once highly esteemed Kammaṭṭhāna among the clergy.

Thirty-two First Trances

There is a mention of Mallaka-tthera organising and obtaining thirty-two first trances, one on each of the thirty-two elements (or items) of the body, in the section Kāya-gatā-sati in the *Visuddhi-magga*; it points to the fact that the Kammaṭṭhāna itself is not without its intrinsic efficient value. The concluding paragraph of the commentary on the above Vibhanga amply shows the possibility of the thirty-two first trances gained by the monk, Mallakatthera. It is given as follows: "Herein the vivid perception of hairs and other items by means of colour, size, direction, space, and limitation is the sign of the after-image. Their arising in meditation as totally disagreeable is the sign of counterpart image. When one again and again gives attention to this sign, thinks over it, and employs deliberations on it through takka and vitakka, then the heaps of four elements rest upon the disagreeable support. Absorption sets in through the first Jhāna. Previous to it the mind organising preparatory and access meditation is with vitakka and vicāra, accompanied with joy and pleasantness, and has the disagreeable sign for the

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support. The absorption is also with vitakka and vicāra, accompanied with joy and pleasantness; but in the plane however it is the form plane. On this support, even if it is disagreeable, pleasantness is felt by one who sees merit in it. The second Jhāna and higher ones however do not arise. Why so? Because of grossness. This is a gross support. Only through vitakka is the concentration of mind produced, and not through transcending vitakka."

A Critical Study

The reason is given towards the end of the above passage for not transcending vitakka in such types of disagreeably contemplation; it is not an illogical reason; but it is not conclusive. The commentary has not considered the possibility of the trance with vicāra, but without vitakka. Whatever can be organised through vitakka or initial application of thought must be naturally practicable to be carried over through vicāra or sustained application of thought. Therefore the trance termed avitakka vicāra-matta cannot be so out-ruled in such a kammaṭṭhāna, as has been done in the commentary. Although we might not be much tempted to organise such a disagreeable kammaṭṭhāna, we must not lose sight of its utility and possibilities, in spite of what is said and given in a commentary. For a thought contained in vitakka or language can be carried over or sustained in vicāra or concept, as has been discussed elsewhere above.

Observation of Dead Body

This most disagreeable kammaṭṭhāna seems to have been practised by the Shākya Prince, even before his renunciation. The Tibetan source, cited by W.W. Rockhill[2] and mentioned elsewhere above, supports this supposition. He has himself recounted his frequent sojourn among the dead bodies to Sāriputta. This reminiscence is fully given in the Mahā Sīhanāda Sutta, the 12th one of the Majjhima-nikāya. The commentary on it covers 28 pages of close print in Sinhalese script. The site of this discourse was the city of Vesāli. The occasion of the Master's preaching it was the slanderous statement, given in public by Sunakhatta, an ex-monk, that the Buddha had no supernormal dhammas nor specific supramundane insights. The

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Buddha, said he, preaches whatever he has acquired through his own mental deliberation, concatenation, and intuitive knowledge. This must have been a sort of shock to the Master, specially from an ex-monk of his own order. Sunakkhatta was, according to the commentary, the son of a Licchavi Prince and an admirer of austerities. Hence the Master related to Sāriputta the story of his disagreeable sojourn.

A Revival

Such a disagreeable object for meditation would not be plausibly fashionable nor palatable at present. But at the time we are speaking of, such practices must have elicited the praise and respect of the people, besides their meditative value. The use of a dead body in notorious practices for black magic had defamed them in the medieval period of our history. Now when we are living in a scientific age, there is no reason why the people could not be won over towards these old meditative practices. There is now no danger nor any risk of contracting sudden illness nor of witnessing hallucinations arising out of superstition concerning the dead body. So the present age has become once more suitable for a revival of this old practice without any hindrance for organising meditation on corpses. The importance of such a practice may be seen in its division into ten different states of putrefaction and that with so rich, minute details in the texts and commentaries.

Method of Contemplation

The relevant text directs us to go to a cremation-ground and to select, for our practice, one of the dead bodies left there. We may not find corpses exactly to the textual specification, which has a wide range from one just dead to one with scattered bones. The purpose seems to be to inspect the successive states of bodily decomposition so that we may fully realise that our body is also subject to similar states of putrefaction and disintegration. Such an impression of a disagreeable object would certainly secure a mental state of distraction from the living body of our own and also that of other persons. This is not hatred, but an aloofness from our being drawn towards bodily attractions and allurements. Apart from the meditative achievement, this reali-

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sation may help us to endure any bodily mishap and calamity with equanimity and calmness in our day-to-day life.

The method of practising this kammaṭṭhāna is to look evenly at a dead body near us and to apply the impression mentally to our own body. This process of looking at it and applying the impression created thereby to our body is to be repeated a number of times. After a few hours' or days' practice, we shall mentally visualize or intuitively realise that our own body is subject to the state of the corpse before us. The after-image gives way to the counterpart-image and the latter passes into samādhi.

NOTES

[1]Legend of Māra—The Māra is said to be the leader of the Māra-kāyika (Māra-bodied or coinhabiting the Māra region with the Māra) devatā or deity. He inhabits the sixth heaven controlling all the regions below his own. He can even possess any one of the inhabitants of the first Brahmaloka or region and is sometimes found to put ideas into the mind of the Brahmā that are wrong according to the Buddhist conception of liberation. This Māra had been trying to dissuade the Shākya Prince from the pursuit of his quest after the new enlightenment. And after the Buddha's attainment of Nibbāna, he tried to discourage the Buddha from disseminating the Dhamma among the people. This Māra is often found to be a real person possessed of a heavenly body and powers. Sometimes he is so subtle and so theoretically stated as to confuse our ideas about his bodily existence. At any rate, he cannot be a mere personification of the mental conflict and struggle of the Prince, Bodhisattva, and Buddha.

[2]W.W. Rockhill *The Life of the Buddha*', pp. 23, 44.

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VII

Successive Steps to Trance

Gradual Process

THE OBJECT for meditation is the ground upon which we may imaginatively construct our steps to reach the height of Trance. The attention paid to it creates a perception of it with a mental impression, which is in reality the raw material to be moulded for our meditative purpose. With vitakka followed by vicāra or vice versa, we go further. When vitakka decreases, vicāra may be prominent. But the state of meditation depends upon the immersion or subsidence of vitakka and vicāra. These two mental factors go on moulding the impression, so that the latter may be utilised to suppress the former. Hence the impression may be uplifted.

We may thus obtain the first trance with 'vitakka and vicāra', which may during the trance appear sparingly off and on. The first trance is also accompanied with joy and pleasure born of seclusion or contemplation. Here it should be borne in mind that the meditative joy and pleasure do not depend upon the object agreeable or disagreeable, but they do depend upon the state of mental concentration. The object before us will be seen as a material one at an initial and preparatory stage of meditation, while the latter is organised with the help of vitakka as well. The perception of the object with the accompanying concept may be technically called the Pari-

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kamma Nimitta, or the preparatory sign. The meditative organisation of this sign is termed the Parikamma Bhāvanā, or the preparatory contemplation. When this sign apears, some time after we thus contemplated, as a clear image in the mind, this after-image is called the Uggaha Nimitta, or the learned or memorized sign, and the original sign or image of the dead body may be seen clearly even with eyes closed. The closing of the eyes is however not necessary; for the clearness of the image itself can be distinctly recognised as an after-image.

With this after-image there begins the Parikamma Samādhi, or the preparatory concentration. The samādhi or concentration of mind clarifies the after-image of its impurities present in the original sign of the dead body. Then the after-image gradually assumes a conceptual image termed the Paṭibhāga Nimitta, or the sign of a counterpart image. It should be understood that this counterpart image is not a percept, but it is a concept almost free from the original support, that is, the dead body before us. The conceptual aspect of this image can be easily apprehended, if we watch and detect the phenomenal character of this sign. It is not visible to the physical eyes; for it has already passed through the process of visual perception and now stands at the threshold of mental conception. While the perception requires the original stimulus from moment to moment and the after-image needs to be reverted to the objective support time and again, the counterpart image is conceived in the mind independently. Although the latter is a visible sign, it is after all a mental concept. So the physical eyes do not see it; it is seen, because the mental concept is endowed with visible quality.

Buddhaghosa's Method

Buddhaghosa in his work, *Visuddhi-magga*, has fully dealt with the counterpart image which is the main criterion for and pivot of all his form trances. But his method of generating it is diametrically opposite to what is taught in the textual portions by the Master. Against and unlike the spirit of the relevant text, Buddhaghosa teaches us to look or gaze intently at the object or kasiṇa, as the case may be, and to learn it so

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vividly as to produce the after-image with the eyes closed. Thereafter the savant says that the practiser should come back to his cell and try to bring back the sign of the after-image to his memory. If he cannot do so, he should visit the place where the object or kasiṇa is, for learning or memorizing the latter again and taking back the image to his cell. He is to sit down there and try to reproduce the same. If he fails to do it, he repeats the process once more. The savant is never tired of advising the novice to do it so many times, say a hundred, a thousand, or even a hundred thousand times—so as to exceed our expectation and to put our patience to a hard test.

Further the savant cannot teach us any direct method to create or arouse the counterpart image out of or from the after-image. Obviously our erudite commentator is following a later tradition in preference to the experiences of adepts including himself. His understanding of counterpart image is, in my humble opinion or conviction rather empirical. His instruction, as regards the producing of the after-image far away from the object, cannot be of early Budhism. It is surprising that a profound scholar and a versatile writer on practical Buddhism like Buddhaghosa should give us a method of organising a fundamental trance through the artificial and tedious device of after-image, upon which he expects the counterpart sign to arise. On this very counterpart sign he builds up almost all his trances. Hence, apart from its probable utility for organising super-normal powers, his method may or may not induce the fundamental form trances.

Basic Method

For organising these form trances, the basic method appears to be a poise of alert and neutral memory and not gazing intently outward at an outside object. The poise of alert and neutral memory receives in a pattern the things presented to the eyes, as something seen and not to be looked at. As a matter of fact, when the things before the eyes are not looked at, these will be seen gradually as a pattern, and not as separate individual objects. Thus seen in an alert and neutral position of mental consciousness, material objects do gradually lose their

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materiality and begin to present themselves as something existing or appearing in space. This phenomenon may be equated with the counterpart image in Buddhaghosa's system, so far as the conceptual image is concerned.

After this counterpart image has begun to stabilize, a state of samādhi is obtained, that is called the Kāmāvacar Samādhi, or samādhi in the material plane. And it is then said that the Upacāra Bhāvanā, or Access contemplation, is accomplished. Then practising on the same sign of the counterpart image by means of the Upacāra Samādhi, one attains the appanā, or a state of absorption, in the trance, known as the first trance of Rupāvācara or Form-plane. When one is getting absorbed, through appanā, into a state of active memory or consciousness, the material plane is transcended and a subtle plane consisting of mere spatial forms is attained and realised.

Technical Terms

The terms used above should not confuse the mind of a novice. They facilitate a step-by-step study of the subject and a ready reference to relevant matters in the text and the commentary. They are mainly three in number, each again subdivided into three classes with a different nomenclature in nimitta or sign. They are parikamma, upacāra, and appanā. Parikamma is the preparatory or preliminary practice of trying to organise a trance on a kammaṭṭhāna, or an object for meditation. Upacāra is brought in to indicate the intermediate practice tending towards the state of appanā, a final stage of each trance viewed separately as a target. But we shall be often aware only of our initial endeavour and final achievement, while the intervening period may pass either as parikamma or as upacāra. There is however no harm, if we mistake the second for the first or even vice versa. The third cannot be mistaken for either of the two.

These three terms are each subdivided into Bhāvanā and Samādhi for the succeeding two classes. For the first or initial class in this scale, only the parikamma has nimitta, while the other two upacāra and appanā have only these two classes, and not the first. The first or nimitta is however joined to parikamma and two other terms, uggaha and paṭibhāga.

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Thus we have three categories, each category having a set of three classes as follows: 1. Parikamma nimitta; 2. Uggaha nimitta; 3. Paṭibhāga nimitta. These are in the ascending order of subtleness, practice, and achievement. Thus an object for meditation is selected or taught according to one's disposition. It is learnt, looked at, or seen as a pattern. The perception of the object stabilizes. It is spoken of as nimitta, and not as the object itself. Our adverting to the object has turned it, so to say, into a nimitta, or a sign. In Buddhism the material object is held to be supportless, non-moral, and unremovable. It is mundane and in the material plane. Hence the object by itself does not constitute any part of our meditative content. It is our mental attention to the object that makes the sign out of the object for our meditative purpose.

When this nimitta or sign is fully grasped, firmly held, vividly learnt, or clearly presented as a pattern before the eyes, the sign is termed uggahanimitta. The sign can be recalled in and by the mind as vividly even with the eyes closed as the object itself can be seen with the eyes open. This is the after-image of the object perceived in the preparatory stage of our learning it. It will be noticed in the discussion under the Buddha's method given above, that the uggaha nimitta obtained by learning or intently looking at the object is an artificial device difficult to produce. Even if it be produced in the mind, it will not fall in line with the spirit of the relevant text. On the contrary the basic method treated of above will fulfil the requirement demanded by and in the teaching of the Master. Viewed in such a light a natural after-image would be produced upon the perception of the objective support clearly and distinctly on the spot, without the need of recalling it far away from the object.

Anomalous Sign

The Patibhāga nimitta, or the counterpart sign arises, according to Buddhaghosa, upon or from the uggahanimitta or the after-image. It is distinctly a mental phenomenon and independent of the object. What has been said about this sign in the *Visuddhi-magga* and commentary by Buddhaghosa is inexplicably anomalous. He says that this sign appears as a

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luminous counterpart of the after-image much more brilliant and extensive than the latter. It must veritably be a conceptual experience that could be obtained by anyone persistent enough to bring about the visual phenomenon. The anomaly is the natural duration of an after-image probably lasting for a few seconds at a time and the feasibility of the production or automatic arising of the abnormal counterpart image by means of a method or device not expressly specified in the *Visuddhi-magga*. However anomalous, the subject is of great importance; for Buddhaghosa relies on this alone to produce almost all the form trances. Doubtlessly this counterpart image partakes of the formal one to some extent and in some respect. The image is independent of its original object, and so is the shape of the form plane. It is conceptual and can therefore be expanded; but even as such it cannot normally exceed the mental capacity. If the latter be of the meditative quality, it would be untenable; for the mental quality can be increased only in trance and the counterpart image is necessary for organising the very trance; thus Buddhaghosa's unqualified claim of the expansion theory of the counterpart image is untenable. He rightly says that it is only a paññatti or a mere concept and as such it has no existence except in the mind, whereas a form has a real existence, so to say, in the form plane.

Bhavana

There are three classes of Bhāvāna corresponding to the three nimittas or signs. The preparatory is the Parikamma Bhāvanā. It is done on the preparatory sign. The intermediary contemplation is called Upacāra Bhāvanā and extends from the time of obtaining the uggaha nimitta to patibhāga nimitta. When consummated, it is said to be a samādhi of the material plane. The third or last class is Appanā Bhāvanā that is operative throughout the organisation of trances next to and above the first trance. Bhāvanā connotes the operational function, whereas Appanā denotes the stabilized states of trances, together with the connotation of operation, that is, concentration. Thus Bhāvanā is very wide in its application. Any meditative operation is and may be called a bhāvanā; for

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example, we have the ānāpāna-sati bhāvanā, samādhi bhāvanā, samatha bhāvanā, and vipassanā bhāvanā. Nevertheless Bhāvanā is not equivalent to appanā, samādhi, or samāpatti.

Appana

As said above, appanā is chiefly thought of as the stabilized state of trance brought about by the operation of concentration. It is thus an operational aspect of Jhāna, or Samāpatti. In Buddhism, the most popular term for trance is Jhāna, Dhyāna in Buddhistic Sanskrit and even in the *Yoga-sūtra*, but it is different from that of Buddhistic Jhāna. Because of its later appearance subsequent to the third, last, or Paṭibhāga nimitta, the term nimitta is obviously not appended to appanā. The two terms, Bhāvanā and Samādhi, are however appended to appanā. Thus we have the appanā-bhāvanā and appanā-samādhi. Again appanā is found in all the eight gradual trances, four form and four formless ones, while the ninth trance arises only after the cessation of mental moments and therefore appanā is not available therein.

Samadhi

We have already mentioned the term, samādhi, in connection with other terms. It is often used in a general sense in its verbal forms as samādhiyati, samāhita, etc. In a specific sense it is found in the cultivated inner organ of samādhi-indriya, in the developed mental power of samādhi-bala, in the stabilized intuitional factor of samādhi-sambojjhaṇga, and in the perfectly channelized path of samma-samādhi. In such instances the term, samādhi, indicates a mature state of concentration. The term is joined with three categories mentioned above and given in compound words as parikamma-samādhi, upacāra-samādhi, appanā-samādhi.

The parikamma or preparatory samādhi arises on the after-image of the uggaha nimitta. This samādhi is not an appanā; but it is produced by contemplating on the preparatory sign well-learnt, that is, the parikamma-nimitta is followed by the parikamma-bhāvanā and the latter is again succeeded by this veryparikamma-samādhi. The progression of this preparatory samdhi through the preparatory sign and contemplation

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indicates the initial stage of concentration. As such it should have been possible to advance it further, through the intermediary sign, contemplation and samādhi to appanā-bhāvanā and appanā-samādhi. But what happens is not through the intermediary sign but it is through the final counterpart sign and intermediary samādhi that the appanā of the first form trance is said to be attained. Again in the case of this first trance, the progress is not through the contemplation of appanā to the appanā-samādhi, but it is direct to the appanā of the first trance. Here the appanā-bhāvanā is utilised for increasing the appanā to attain the second and higher trances. Appana connotes the samādhi obtained by the first and higher trances, whereas the appanā-bhāvanā does the operational aspect of contemplation.

Viewed through the presence or absence of vitakka and vicāra, there are three categories of samādhi encompassing all the samādhis. They are sa-vitakka sa-vicāra, a vitakka vicāra-matta, that is, the first form trance and the second form trance of the five-trance system, respectively. All the rest of the higher trances may be briefly defined as the a-vitakka a vicāra samādhi, or the trance without vitakka and without vicāra. This definition shows the importance of vitakka and vicāra in samādhi or trance, as mentioned several times before.

Conclusion

The term, appanā-samādhi, should be understood in the progressive series of parikamma samādhi, upacāra samādhi, and appanā samādhi. But this last term is seemingly a tautology, in as much as both the words of the term signify a state of trance. It is said that both of the upacāra and appanā samādhis arise on the sign of the counterpart image. So we have to differentiate the second samādhi from the first in the scale of the progressive series. Because of such an ambiguity in the use of words like samādhi and its verbal forms, we often find the term Jhāna to designate the form trance, samāpatti to indicate the formless trance, and appanā to show the operational function of concentration. We need not however worry over these subtleties and intricacies. For a real progress in the path of trance is secured not by worrying over

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them, but by rising above them. The energy even a little spent in organising and maintaining a trance is worth much more than a hairsplitting literary exercise to master them. Ganthadhura or the carrying of the yoke or load of literary knowledge of the Tipiṭaka has been belittled by the Master. The above discussion might have shown that an experience of meditation alone can help us to understand the real import of any difficult term. In fact, the whole of early Buddhism may be regarded as a systematic exposition of the Master's meditative experience and its logical development.

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VIII

Vedanā-Anupassanā or Observation of Feeling

Importance

THIS IS one of the four observations included in the Sati Paṭṭhāna mentioned above. Because it is a gross and therefore easily tangible device, the observation of the body mentioned above is fully described in the discourses and divisions of the Sutta and Abhidhamma Piṭakas. The second observation, that is, vedanā-anupassanā, being subtle and not easily tangible, is only briefly stated in the text and similarly explained in the commentary. Consequently it is often difficult to begin its methodical practice from the short stereotyped instruction given in the relative suttas and vibhaṅga. The commentary deals with its doctrinal aspect, without going into detail for practical purpose. Although the feeling is necessarily present in the observation of the body respiration, and bodily motion and action, the vedanā is not patent in the practice owing to the attention being given to its (the body's) grossly physical aspect. The seed of such a subtle practice is however discernible in the significant instructions or sentences in the text. For example, we read in the portion dealing with bodily observation that the monk's memory must be constantly alert to the concept that there is or exists the body. This body,

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however material, must be felt rather than perceived or known. In the part dealing with the memory of respiration, there is a sentence m aning that the monk learns to breathe in and out, while being aware of the whole body. It again means that the whole body must be felt rather than perceived or known. In the part dealing with the memory of respiration, there is a sentence meaning that the monk learns to breathe in and out, while being aware of the whole body. It again means that the whole body must be felt to be aware of it. The memory of bodily motion and action must be kept up through the feeling instead of perceiving or knowing it. Hence vedanā is of great importance for our practice in cultivating the memory, as a subtle but sound appliance for the purpose. Once understood and taken hold of, vedanā-anupassanā will be a source of pleasure, as well as an easy means of organising a speechless stage of meditation. I am therefore dwelling on it at some length.

Bodily Feeling

In Buddhism the cosmic world encompassing the whole universe of matter and mind is divided into five khandhas or heaps. The first of them is the rūpak-khandha made up of four material elements and their derivatives, twenty-four in number. The second is the immaterial vedanā-khandha; it is not matter; it is felt in the body; it should have been, as such, non-existent; but it is thought of as existing wherein or wherever it is felt. In Buddhistic psychology it is one of the fifty-two mental concomitants and it constitutes a category of its own. It arises and vanishes, and has the same support and resides in the same vatthu or organ, as does the mental moment it is associated with. Unlike the quality of matters in other oriental systems, it is here a cetasika having a parallel existence as sound as the citta or the mind itself. It is also not the phassa or contact, another one of the cetasika; neither is it a phoṭṭhabba or touchable or tangible of three elemental groups, that is, a phassa or contact present in the three material elements, earth, fire, and air. The water element is supposed to have no phassa of its own: for the Adhidhamma reasoning has assigned the function of adhesion to the water-element for joining the other three

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elements. Thus the feeling has a separate, characteristic function and existence as has the mind.

Here we are not concerned with the material properties of the body, neither with the conception of its rigidity and solidity. Wherever the body is felt as such, we are to remember it exactly as it is felt. We should not try to define it, neither are we to imagine its properties. Any conjecture indulged in about its particulars will only divert our mind away to a series of deliberations in vitakka. The body will be felt as something undefinable, but distinctly comprehensible as feeling. The memory of this feeling is unforgettable and should be constantly kept in mind. The main purpose is to arouse and then maintain the memory from moment to moment, and if possible unbroken. Since the consciousness is associated and accompanied with the feeling, the latter kept under the full view of our memory will automatically help us in retaining the former likewise. But it is to be noted that the feeling is much more easily remembered than the consciousness; for the consciousness is subtler than the feeling.

Feeling of Respiration

Respiration entails a muscular movement. With each breath in and out, our respiratory muscular part also makes a parallel movement in like manner. The feeling of such movement can be easily detected and remembered in our respiration from moment to moment. Unlike what we were supposed to remember in the practice of ānāpāna, we are here to remember the feeling at each step of the respiratory muscular movement. This method of memorizing the respiration is not however more difficult than what we did in that of ānāpāna in the bodily observation. In ānāpāna our attention is and was directed to the air incoming or outgoing, at each breath, through our nostrils. But in the method here described we feel the movement of respiratory organs and do not give our attention to the air of the respiration. Nevertheless we may try to feel the rushing of such air against the sensitive wall of the nostrils. The former method is much preferable to the latter for our purpose. It is not clear in the text as to whether the former is meant or the latter. Probably it was

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left to the choice, liking, or capacity of the novice or the adept as regards the attention to be paid to it.

The text instructs a novice to breathe in with memory, and to breathe out with memory. There may be three alternatives to keep this memory in the mind. This memory may be centred on the air rushing in and rushing out of the nostrils at each breath; or on the feeling of such rushing air round the wall inside the nostrils; or on the feeling of the respiratory muscular organ moving up and down at each attempt of breathing in and out. The attention will have to be paid thus either to the air, or to the inside of the nostrils, or to the chest and abdomen. The first alternative is vague or mixed and the second is probably meant at places in the text; for example, the short breath may mean the second alternative for attention. The third alternative is observable in the long breath of the text. "When the monk takes in a long breath, he knows that he is taking in a long breath." The long breath here may be taken for a deep breath; for the air or its feeling may not be detected in its length, but it can be felt in its depth easily.

Feeling and Memory

In Buddhistic psychology, the citta or the mind arises together with a number of cetasika dhammas or mental concomitants. They are fifty-two in number, as mentioned above. Seven out of them are found in every citta or mental consciousness. So these seven are termed sabbacitta-sadhāranā cetasikā dhammā, or general mental concomitants. They are phasso, vedanā, saññā, cetanā, ekaggatā, jivit-indriyam, and manasikāra. Phasso is the contact between the inner organ and outer object or support; it is immediately succeeded by vedanā. Phasso is less easy to detect than vedanā. Thus the vedanā or the feeling can be easily felt and made a practical means of maintaining an unbroken flow of memory or consciousness.

Memory, on the other hand, is a general mental concomitant of a sobhana citta or the morally good mind, and not of the mind in general. Such a memory is sati that flows in a series of conscious moments. It is morally good, because it is productive of meritorious actions including the trances. The function of memory is practically to remember the passing of moments on

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some support or other. It is therefore no wonder that the Master has given high praise to sati as a panacea fulfilling every purpose. As a matter of fact, without sati nothing can be performed in the field of Buddhistic virtue, meditation, and insight. We have already pointed out that sati or memory in Buddhistic psychology is not a faculty of remembering the past events, but it is to remember or be conscious of a series of consecutive moments. The verbal form of remembering the past events is found in the Master's introductory remark such as "Abhi-jānāmi kho pana-aham", meaning — "Verily do I remember."

Vedanā is obviously a wider term than sati. The former can be equated with the latter, provided the feeling is kept constant from moment to moment. When the organ of respiration of the body in general is actively felt, the memory is automatically drawn towards the feeling. The memory is of course finer than the feeling. Nevertheless it can be said that to feel is to be conscious of something felt. Both for the feeling and the memory we have to be inwardly active to arouse and maintain each one of them. Thus, if we can actively feel, the feeling will be invariably associated with its memory. But we have at the same time to be aware of the finer aspects of the feeling. Viewed in such a light, there will not appear any great difference between the feeling and the memory, the latter being of course a finer mental concomitant than the former.

Observing and Feeling

In the observation of the body, we have also to employ vitakka and vicāra, specially when we are observing the elemental, constituting, and disagreeable aspect of the body. It is easy to do so with respect to a physical object or support as the body, but the case will be different when feeling is concerned. Feeling is a better agent than observation in the practice of ānāpāna, iriyāpatha, and sati-sampajjañña, or respiration, body in motion and action. It would not be thought that feeling is inoperative in other bodily observations. In reality, when the impression gained through the observation of the putrid corpse is mentally applied to one's own body, the application of the impression is to be felt and not merely thought of. The anupassanā in the

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sati paṭṭhāna is as much observing the object or the subject as remembering it step by step. Hence feeling is the inner means of arousing and maintaining memory as observing is the outer means of doing so even in the field of the kāyā-anupassanā.

In the vedanā-anupassanā, the feeling is predominant. The text pays utmost attention to the pleasant, unpleasant or painful, and neutral feelings in the body. The last or neutral feeling includes feelings other than the former two feelings pleasant and unpleasant. The feeling of pleasantness is not to be enjoyed as such, neither that of unpleasantness abhorred. Such an attitude of the mind is expected, at every step of spiritual advancement, in Buddhism. Not only in the Buddhistic philosophy, but in almost all the oriental systems of philosophy, such a frame of mind is welcomed and inculcated in every member of the clergy and serious-minded laity. The target of these systems is liberation from the round of rebirths, freedom from every bondage, human and divine, and absence of pleasure and pain. From our modern view-point such a target would appear to need a re-orientation. And early Buddhism through a gradual system of nine trances, form, formless and cessation, does the needful.

Practice of Feeling

We have dealt with the practice of bodily observation. Because of the object or the support being a physical body and its parts, the observation of the body is defined as gross in the commentary. The text does not however state that it is so. To all appearances, the ānāpāna is not gross, neither is the iriyāpatha, nor the sati-sampajjañña. The principal objective in these three practices is the maintaining of sati or memory. And sati is subtle and not gross. The Master has nowhere underrated these three practices. The other three elemental and disagreeable practices are employed for the purpose of purifying the memory and dispelling the ego-complex. They cannot be replaced otherwise. Thus the observation of the body is made a model for the organisation of the sati patthan. It is partly gross and partly subtle. The physical supports are initially

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gross, but go on becoming gradually less gross and finally assume a subtle form when a stage of form trance begins to arise from them. Hence we practically find this kammaṭṭhāna as a mixed, consolidated, or systematized device for the realisation of the Master's conception of discipline or virtue, samādhi paññā or insight of liberation. The underlying idea in all the four observations is wonderfully identical. It is the cultivation of sati or memory, the disposition or poise of non-attachment, the eradication of the ego-complex, and the insight into nibbāna. The practice of feeling brings the goal nearer.

Place and Position

We resort to a quiet place, neither very near to nor far away from a habitation. When we have finished our meal and are at leisure to devote a few hours to meditation without being troubled by any pressing business, such a place will indeed be a place of seclusion for the purpose. We sit down on the ground under a tree or in the open with the legs gathered under the thighs, or crossed upon them, or one of the legs under and the other upon the thigh. We need not worry over or about a particular seat or posture; any seat formed with the legs gathered comfortably will serve the purpose; a chair or a couch to sit upon should be discarded; a seat with the legs extended or scattered is unwanted. We are to sit erect, keeping the backbone straight and the neck upright and firm. Such a seat makes one feel that one is well seated, minded to meditate, and not inclined to walk about. A few days' practice may make the seat easy and comfortable.

The position of hands and eyes is not stipulated in the text. Probably it was taken for granted that the hands would be so placed upon the thighs, knees, or lap as to stop their movements. We may loosely hold the knees with the fingers. The spectacular mudras or hand-postures will be more ostentatious than conducive to stability and meditation. The position of the eyes is likewise unspecified in the text. "Pari-mukham satim upaṭhapetvā" or 'in front memory being installed, is the significant phrase often repeated in the textual instruction. Following it, we may also keep our vacant gaze in front. To try gazing at the tip of the nose or at the mid-spot between the eye-brows

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will be tiring and following some other systems. The eyes are better kept evenly or comfortably open; they may be even half-closed in this practice; the fully-open eyes are not found, nor the firmly closed, except for a specific purpose in other systems of yoga.

Detection of Feeling

Then we start detecting the feeling within the body. We feel that we are seated; we are feeling that we have a body; our hands and feet, arms and legs, and thighs are gradually felt; the head is kept up and felt; the chest and abdomen are likewise felt. We should try to feel the whole body and to be aware of it through the vehicle of feeling. We become naturally aware of the body through feeling, even when our eyes are closed. The sensation of touch is finer and more subtle than that of feeling. When it gives pleasure or pain, it is detected as sukhā vedanā, or dukkhā vedanā. Hence we read in the text: "When the monk is feeling a pleasurable vedanā, he knows that he is feeling a pleasurable vedanā. When he feels a painful vedanā, he knows that he is feeling a painful vedanā." Thus the feeling is detected as pleasant or painful from moment to moment, and the series of such detections constitutes a flow of memory associated with them. The process of lengthening and broadening them is similar to that of ānāpāna-sati. In the latter case we have the word 'sato va' or with memory, whereas we have none in the former case. It is because an active feeling is itself a sort of memory, as we have explained above.

The pleasant and painful feelings are at once introduced in the text before taking up the neutral feeling, because the former (i.e. pleasant and painful feelings) are patent and easier to detect than the latter (i.e. neutral feeling). The neutral feeling, or 'a-dukkham a-sukhā vedanā' is felt when, the two feelings, pleasant and painful, having gone away, the neutral feeling between the two is left. In order to drive this idea deep, the commentary of the relative sutta and the vibhanga has given us a long simile of a deer running away, after stepping on a midway rock but leaving no foot-print upon it. A deer-hunter pursuing the deer comes up and sees no mark upon the rock, but he notices the foot-print on both the sides of the rock. He then

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concludes that the deer must have run away after stepping on the rock lying in the middle. Then the commentator compares the foot-prints on the sides to the pleasant and painful feelings, while the midway rock without such a mark is compared to the neutral feeling. The simile was given here in substance to show that the commentary is not easy reading for grasping the import of even a simple idea. We read a long passage or paragraph through, but sometimes miss the main purport. We have to read the whole passage for the purpose over again. The idea might have missed or lost nothing without this long simile.

Although the neutral feeling has been so assiduously explained in the commentary, it should be considered as difficult to detect as the other two. If the reader has followed even cursorily what has been said before in the above few sections, it must be clear to him that most of our bodily feelings are neutral and that it is easy for us to feel them most often. What we need is to string them in a series, if possible, without a break. Further we have also to see that we do not forget a single link in the series without paying attention to its memory. The series will appear to be broken at the point, where and when we shift our attention from one part of the body to the other. As for example, if we are feeling or attending to the feeling of the head at a particular moment and shift the attention abruptly to the feeling of the hands alone, we may forget to feel the head at the same time. This lapse is what we may think of as a break of feeling or consciousness at the point of shifting. Hence the Master has taught us not only to lengthen the conscious moments but also to broaden them. In the above instance we should have either kept on feeling the head, or slowly included therein the hands as well. In other words, we should have broadened our attention to the feeling of the head and the hands at the same moment. With a little practice, such an inclusion or broadening of feeling should not be difficult. Thus the detection of the feeling becomes in effect the active effort to feel the body; and at the same time the attention aroused by such an effort and paid to the feeling equates with the memory we are to maintain.

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Feeling and Vitakka Vicara

The observation of ānāpāna smothers the mental effort to spell out our vocal thought or thinking, while that of vedanā-anupassanā does so more quickly and thoroughly. For the effort to speak mentally is directed to observing the respirations in ānāpāna-sati and to observing the feeling in vedanā-anupassanā, so continuously as to leave no time for vitakka to intervene. We revert to vitakka only when we cannot employ the mind in something more interesting than what vitakka can attract us with. These two observations are decidedly of a much more profound nature than vitakka and therefore draw our attention forcibly to them. Moreover, a mental state without vitakka becomes more interesting and powerful than a state with the latter, because the former lies in the borderland of a trance, whereas the latter does not.

Vicāra is in its essence a conceptual thought or thinking. Although the state of mind with vicāra is not as disturbing as that with vitakka, both the former and the latter are similar in their fickleness, scattering, and disquietude. The mental state without both of them overpowers the state with them, for reasons given above in the case of vitakka. Moreover, vicāra not fed or supported by vitakka cannot linger long as has been mentioned several times elsewhere above. Even as a sustained application of thought, vicāra is not very different from vitakka as an initial application of thought. For, the word thought does not necessarily signify a state of calmness, collectedness, or meditative composure. The two observations mentioned in the above paragraph give no room even for vicāra to linger on, inasmuch as the mental effort required for vicāra is being employed for maintaining the said observations.

Categories of Feeling

Although we have treated of the two observations side by side, they are not of equal value. Both of them stop the propping up of vitakka and the stopping of vicāra soon after we observe ānāpāna and vedanā continuously for a few minutes. Nevertheless ānāpāna is gross, easy to be organised, and comparatively narrow in extent. On the other hand vedanā is subtle, less easy to be detected, and broader in extent. In the

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practice of vedanā we have to feel the body inwardly and not merely know that we have the body. But the same thing is implied in a mixed idea, when the Master gives the following precept in this connection. "Sabba kāya paṭi-samvedi assasissāmiti sikkhati...passasissāmiti sikkhati" (Ānāpāna pabbam). This is the meaning; 'knowing the whole body, I shall breathe out—thus the monk learns...I shall breathe in—thus he learns.' Hence the knowing of the whole body is possible only through the means of feeling the body as a whole. The word 'paṭi-samvedi' may mean either the knowing of the body by means of feeling or that by conceiving it. But to all appearances the meaning is a mixed one. The Master made it easier to practise ānāpāna through gross or subtle means obviously according to one's capacity or competencc or choice.

In vedanā-anupassanā there are no such complications. We have a straight practice of feeling. But herein also the Master has made it easier for different types of practisers. For sukhā vedanā and dukkhā vedanā are comparatively less subtle; only a-dukkham a-sukhā vedanā, or neutral feeling, is subtle and has a very wide range. The latter obtains in common and day-to-day life and experience, as well as in the fourth and higher trances, form and formless. This neutral feeling could not be therefore made less subtle and easier than what has been taught by the Master. We have however, explained and given a method to detect the bodily feeling neutral or otherwise.

The Master has classified the whole field of feeling into nine categories for the purpose of practising vedanā-anupassanā in the Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta. They can be divided into two classes, simple and complex. The simple class is merely given as sukhā, dukkhā, and a-dukkham a-sukhā, three kinds of feeling in number. The complex class has these three main vedanās, each computed with sāmisa, or associated with mundane paraphernalia of enjoyment or sufferance, and nirāmisa, or without such paraphernalia and connected with disposition conducive to virtue, meditation, and insight. Since vedanā is a fundamental mental concomitant and found in every mental moment, such categories can be further multiplied and classified according to different types of mind in various planes, material, form, and formless, normal and supernormal, mundane and supramun-

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dane. But the Master has condensed all of them into these nine categories for meditative purposes in this important precept.

Reference to Observation on Feeling

This practice has not been dealt with in the commentary as clearly and fully as bodily practice. The commentary has mainly dwelt on the doctrinal aspect from different points of view, reiterating the non-ego concept as a main theme. The doctrine of non-ego in the commentary is never as interesting, as convincing, nor as deep as we find the concept of non-ego explained in the Discourses. The commentary on the relative portion of Vedanā-anupassāna in Sati-paṭṭhāna Sutta records the following: "Who feels?—No satto (being), nor any puggalo (individual) who-so-ever feels. Whose is feeling?—No satto's, nor any puggalo's is the feeling. What is the cause of feeling?—The feeling is due to the support of the physical organ. How or why does he (the monk, or the practiser) know it so?—Having made the organ as a support, the feeling itself is felt, or feels. Taking that occurrence of feeling, there comes off a mere common parlance such as I feel." But the feeling cannot logically be said to feel or to be felt. The Master has not said so.

The commentator is evidently not fully satisfied with what he has dealt with in this section. Hence he has mentioned the following suttas as references, obviously for further study, though he remarks that the theme has been dealt with in these and other suttas. They are: Taṇhā-saṅkhaya Cūla and Mahā, Vedalla Culla and Mahā, Raṭṭha-pāla, Māgandiya, Dhātu-vibhaṅga, Ānanja-sappāya, in the Majjhima-nikāya; in the Digha-nikāya-Mahā-nidāna, Sakka-pañha, Mahā-sati-paṭṭhāna; in the Samyutta-nikāya-Cula-nidāna, Rakkhūpama, Pariviman-sana, and the whole of Vedanā-samyutta. This large number of references will show the importance of the practice on feeling. The commentator however harps on a single theme. It is this: "The Master, at first taking up the Rūpa or material Kamma-ṭṭhāna, showed the A-rūpa or immaterial Kammaṭṭhāna through the turning over of the Vedana." It is but natural that the practice on a gross object should be taught first and then the subtle object or subject should be introduced in the practice. But what is to be marked here is the emphasis on the professed

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single means of vedanā, where we conclude that the latter must have been also important from the canonical view-point.

As a matter of fact the form trance, at least in its three stages, is organised and maintained through vedanā or feeling. In the formless trance also vedanā is not inactive. Vedanā must be continuing throughout the series of eight gradual trances, as otherwise its cessation in the last or ninth stage could not have been so expressly stated. It appears that the practice in feeling gradually went out of use in later times, because a workable deliberation for generating a philosophical insight is difficult through vedanā, as compared to and contrasted with one through the popular contemplation on the body and its parts. We have shown above that the practice of ānāpāna is decidedly easy and possible through feeling, but still ānāpāna has not been included in the practice on feeling. After a fully detailed treatment of the causes in relegating the function of bodily contemplation, the practice on feeling is briefly and cursorily touched upon in both the text and the commentary. This might have been seemingly one of the latter practice to the former. We have however shown that Vedanā-anupassanā cannot be superseded by any part of the Kāyā-anupassanā, and that the maintenance of memory is naturally easy through feeling.

At present we shall not be dwelling on the individual differences of the suttas given in the above reference. If the commentator were confident of his exposition of the observation on feeling, he would not have given the names of so many suttas, even short summaries of which would cover at least as many pages as there are suttas. The theme presented by him and given above will have plausibly shown that our conclusion given above is not far from the truth; it is so specially when he refers to this very portion of the commentary, the exposition of the feeling as the means of organising immaterial objectives, in commenting at least on the first sutta, Cūla-taṇhā-saṅkhaya, out of the suttas referred to. Since there are some interesting matters in these suttas and their commentary, we are cursorily taking up the first four suttas and their commentary. And this short reference will be much shortened, if we try to present a connected account on the basis of the text and the commentary

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combined. Further, in order to facilitate its treatment we shall give the account under separate sub-headings below.

Buddha and Heavenly Being

The first sutta referred to, or the 47th sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, mainly deals with a short precept on the eradication of tanhā or greed, given by the Master to Sakka, the Lord of the Second Heaven. It is enigmatic for us to reconcile the Buddhistic as well as other religious and philosophical concepts of heaven and hell with our material cosmic world. We can locate neither heaven nor hell anywhere in our known world. In Buddhism the six regions, spheres or layers of heaven are also included in the kāmāvacara bhumi or the material world of plane. Hence the enigma becomes still more puzzling. There are several suttas, in which Sakka paid visits to the Master either alone or in company with his retinue. On this occasion he was alone.

This Sakka was, in his previous birth, a scholar named Magha in the village called Macala of the Magadha country. His conduct and behaviour were like those of a Bodhisatto. He gathered thirty-three men and performed meritorious actions. In the middle part of the village there was a site where the people used to gather together. In that place he found, drained and cleared a marshy spot or piece of land and made it pleasant to look at. Gradually he constructed thereon a platform and a rest-house. Issuing forth therefrom with his associates as far as a distance of one yojana or eight miles around, he levelled the uneven ground and built there whatever was proper and suitable to be made. Thus he earned much merit. Fulfilling seven kinds of pious service, Magha with his associates was born, after he and others had died, in the Tāvatinsa or Second Heaven. Such a service is in keeping with the Buddha's precept of obligatory services in the order of monks and their disciples.

At that time the community of asuras inhabited the second heaven. All of these asuras were of the same life-span and the same colour as that of the devas or heavenly beings. The asuras thought that the new arrivals were newly-born deva-puttas and therefore arranged to celebrate a mahāpana or a grand drink on the occasion. This Sakka gave a secret warning by a sign to the deva-puttas. The foolish asuras drank the gaṇḍa-pāna to

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their fill and instantly fell asleep. Sakka gave the sign to the deva-puttas and had the asuras held by their feet and thrown to the bottom of the mountain Sineru (Sumeru in Sanskrit). The early friendship between the asuras and the devas is also supported by the account found in the Himavat Khaṇḍa of the *Skaṇḍa Purāna*. According to it, the asuras under their leader Hiraṇyakaṣipu and the suras or devas under their head Śakra or Indra were living in heaven as friends. Śakra's arrogance so infuriated a powerful sage as to bring a curse down upon their friendship, the mainstay of such arrogant self-confidence.

The commentary further says that the habitation of the asuras lies at the bottom of Sineru, as extensive as that of the devas. Therein the former have a great tree called Cittapāṭali. When this tree's blossoming time comes on, they know that this place is not the second heaven. Then they, shouting a war-cry such as 'Hold them, capture it', climb Sineru like ants. In this manner at times the devas conquer the asuras and at times the latter conquer the former. At that time the victory was that of the devas. The devas pursued them as far as the ocean.

Such an account indicates a material world; but the habitations and inhabitants appear to us as nothing less than an enigma not compatible with our modern concepts, beliefs, and tastes. When we find the Master also seriously contributing to such a concept, we are mystified by its real purport. We cannot conceive the idea that the Buddha was a victim to any superstitious tradition or hallucination. His unequivocal refusal to admit such ideas is proof that he was not.

This Heavenly Being was going to a heavenly garden on a pleasure trip accompanied by his whole retinue. Just before entering the gate of the garden, he thought that the question striking his mind then and there was of paramount importance and might grow hazy after indulgence in the pleasure party. So he disappeared from the back of his favourite elephant, Erāvaṇa, Airāvata in Sanskrit, and appeared near the Master. He put the question to the Master and requested him to give a short answer. The gist of the reply was typical of the Master. He said, "Sabbe dhammā nālam abhinivesāya." This short sentence literally means that all the dhammas are not fit for clasping. The commentary gives us a long explanation. In short all the dhammas

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mean five khandhas or heaps, twelve āyatanas or abodes, and eighteen dhātus or elements. These three categories are three kinds of classification made from different standpoints. They may also be comprehended in the ascending order of concept. They exhaust practically all the items enumerated in the Buddhistic philosophy, excepting the pure and uncreated Nibbāna, though the term 'Nibbāna-dhātu' is also spoken of.

Again the commentary takes up the word 'abhinivesa' and explains that all these dhammas are not enough, nor competent, nor proper for grasping them through craving or dogmatism. For they do not stand in the same position as they are grasped. The commentator then quite ingeniously derives there from the Buddhistic verities of impermanence, suffering, and non-ego. This word in its Sanskrit form occurs in the ninth sūtra of the second part in the *Yoga-sūtra*. The literal meaning of this sūtra might have come very near to the Pāli import; but the Sanskrit commentary on this sūtra has limited its meaning to an ego-concept that is foreign to the Buddhistic philosophical tenet. Thus we can clearly see an anti-Buddhistic attitude at least in the Sanskrit commentary on this yoga-philosophy, which proves by the way the antecedent of the former Buddhistic non-ego concept to the opposite attitude of this yoga-philosophy.

So far as the vedanā or feeling is concerned, the commentary refers it to the relative portion of the Satti Paṭṭhāna Sutta already described. His theme is the same as given therein. Towards the end of this precept we have the usual typical criterion as "Na ca kiñci loke upādiyati" meaning that the monk or the yogāvacara craves nothing whatsoever in the body, the feeling, the consciousness, and the dhammas, as the case may be. The commentary explains that he does not crave anything belonging to sankhāra or mental formations through taṇhā or inherent desire. Not craving anything, he does not get terrified; he automatically and by himself gets liberated through the attainment of Nibbāna. And he knows and realises that his round of births is ended, his duty done, and his further works finished. Thus did the Master preach to Sakka the short precept of eradicating taṇhā.

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Heaven Quakes

The above precept was given to the Heavenly Being by the Master in the Pubba-ārāma or the Eastern Monastery in Sāvatthi. This unique building was constructed by Visākhā at a fabulously great cost, next only to Jetavana of Anātha-piṇḍika situated in the southern part of the same city. The donor of this palatial monastery was the daughter-in-law of Migāra, a very rich merchant of Sāvatthi. This lady has been highly admired in the text and commentary not only for her large donation, but also for her intellectual qualifications. Several suttas are found, in which we cannot but admire her character and acumen.

She was born in the city of Bhaddiya as a daughter of merchant Dhananjaya, the son of merchant Meṇḍaka. She was married to Puṇṇa-vaḍḍhana Kumāra, the son of Migāra. We do not meet this kumāra anywhere in the text or the commentary excepting the mention of his name. This is an exceptional instance of a husband being totally overlooked and disregarded obviously owing to the overwhelming personality of the wife. Even the father-in-law is quickly forgotten soon after the genius and integrity of the daughter-in-law defeat his mediocrity and win the title Migāra-mātā or the Mother of Migāra. We can gather a life-history of this illustrious lady from a number of suttas and embellish it with the commentatorial accounts, specially because of many discourses being held and events occurring in her famous monastery.

To resume the story, Sakka was much delighted with the Master's precept and expressed his full satisfaction and concurrence with it. Then he took his leave and disappeared. His farewell words were however overheard by Maggallāna, the renowned disciple of the Master. He wanted to find out whether the visitor fully understood the Master's short precept so pithily given, or whether the latter unknowingly uttered the farewell words expressing the concurrence with the precept, inasmuch as it contained a deep Buddhistic tenet. So he disappeared from his cell near the Master's and appeared in the second heaven.

He was welcomed respectfully by Sakka. When the former inquired of the latter about what he had heard from the Master, Sakka actually missed or pretended to have missed it and could

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not recall it just then, because he was very busy, he said, with the heavenly duties. Instead he began to show the niceties of the Vejayanta Pāsāda, the heavenly palace, one by one, to Moggallāna. This unwanted diversion bored the serious monk. He thought, "This yakkha has been living in an exceedingly negligent way." So he quickly organised the water kasiṇa and directed it to the foundation of the palace. He then hit a spot upon it with his toe. The whole building shook as if it were floating precariously upon the surface of water. The quake partly scared and partly delighted the yakkha, or the Bright and Powerful Being. The cause of such a sentiment of his was a display of supernormal power on the part of the principal disciple of the Master, for whom he had the greatest reverence.

This sentiment at once received his memory or made him ashamed of his frivolous cajolery. He became serious and related the whole discourse to Moggallāna. This done, the monk vanished from the heaven and re-appeared in his cell. Then he went up and related, to the Master the whole story. The authenticity of this incident or story can be found as a short reference in several gāthās or verses and discourses.

Heaven's Stuff

The quaking of the heavenly palace of considerable dimensions was due to the changing of its foundation from the heavenly stuff into liquidity. However for a short time, it was and is not without significance. Both the stuffs must be of equal quality; as otherwise the phenomenon could not have occurred so realistically, nor been reported by a serious disciple to the most revered Master. Here we have an enigma of the mental power changing a kāmāvacara stuff into a liquid matter. We cannot deny the phenomenon against an array of the textual evidence; but we can easily change our material concept of the heavenly stuff for the mental or psychic one. We can likewise neither deny the heaven with its paraphernalia, nor locate it anywhere in our material world known and even so far unknown.

Hence we have to examine the term, kāmāvacara, minutely. The term is often translated as equivalent to matter, but kāma is decidedly wider in its denotation than our pure matter. The kāmāvacara plane extends, according to Buddhistic terminology,

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from the lowest hell, through the habitation of beasts and birds and the spirits' region, and that of asuras, to our own human world and hence to the sixth heaven just beneath the Brahmaloka, the form plane.

From the above enumeration of different categories included in the kāmāvacara bhūmi, we are only sure of the plane we inhabit together with beasts and birds. We know nothing realistically neither about hell and six layers of heaven, nor those of asuras and dubious spirits. It is however plain that these regions and layers of heaven are not made of equal stuff, though they are all said to belong to the single kāmāvacara bhūmi. The term kāmāvacara will have to be comprehended in the canonical and commentatorial sense. In this sense it is a psychological term meaning a state of the mind that moves on from moment to moment in the sphere where our desires often roam about. At least it is not matter throughout.

Hence we can fairly conclude that all the six layers of heaven lying between our human world and the first Brahmaloka corresponding to the first form trance are seemingly psychic spheres or regions not to be equated with the material ones in their totality. There are many references in the Nikāyas to deva-vimānas or heavenly flying abodes that lift up and carry heavenly beings with their company and retinue and paraphernalia wherever they wish to go. It is also to be noted that the individual devas are equipped with separate vimānas or flying abodes simultaneously with their emergence in the heaven. This additional piece of information again points to their psychic formation. Once we are certain of it, the enigma aforesaid dissolves itself, and everything touching heaven and heavenly beings becomes, from our material points of view, psychic phenomena. We cannot however determine the extent and degree, to which these psychic phenomena persist and are aware of their own individual existence from their own standpoint independently of the mind perceiving such phenomena. Here we are not complicating them with insolvable philosophical dogmas concerning idealism, or realism, or other metaphysical questions. We are concerned only with meditative verities and phenomena. We had to be clear about this concept to be met with inevitably in a later period of our thesis under research.

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Wrong Views

The Larger or Mahā Taṇhā-saṅkhaya Sutta, the 48th or next to the one discussed above, is very interesting. It is about the Buddhistic concept of mental flow without any overlapping of one mental moment to the next. According to the discourse, each mental moment is quite separate from the other. The commentary mentions another sutta, Alagadda, the 22nd of this very Nikāya. In the former a monk named Sāti, who is not well read or informed in the Buddhistic scripture, forms a wrong view about the phenomenon of rebirth due to his recitation and study of rebirth stories. He used to listen to the Master telling the stories of the past lives. He thus thought: "Out of the five heaps, the following four, matter, vedanā, saññā, and saṅkhāra, cease after they arise. But Viññāṇa or Consciousness goes and moves on from this world to the other, and from the other world to this one. It is the consciousness that goes and moves on in this manner and none else does so." Such a view was fundamentally wrong, because consciousness also arises and ceases like each of the above four. Moreover, the other three do so at the same time as and with the same consciousness as the accompanying mental concomitants.

When the Master heard the monk Sāti holding such a wrong view, he reprimanded the monk in the assembly of his monks and disciples for doing so. Apart from other weighty considerations and reasons, such a view would falsify the meditative experience. The Master, therefore, addressing the assembly, began to prove the hollowness of such an attitude of the mind. He explained that everything including the consciousness arises out of its accompanying cause of factors and ceases due to the vanishing of the latter. The commentary says that this view is sassata-dassanam or the seeing of eternality in this series of movement. The Brahma-jāla, the first sutta of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, deals with four types of the eternality theory in detail.

It is however difficult to say, from the stereotyped phrases and sentences recorded in the text, what the offending monk really held. He maintains that the migrating viññāṇa is 'vado vedayya' or one who speaks and feels. It is the one who experiences the fruits of good and bad actions. Such a view cannot be said to correspond with the theory of eternality as we know

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it from other oriental philosophical systems. To all appearances he was voicing a theory concerning the soul, in the common sense of the term only, not outlawed even in Buddhism. Such an individual unity or entity is accepted as used in common parlance or by common people. This entity will be always changing as it, so to say, goes or moves on through rounds of births. The first words of the Buddha, "Aneka-jāti sansāram... khaya majjha gā," meaning 'Many a round of births...came to an end', are given in the *Dhammapada* and mentioned also in the commentary of the first book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. These words posit that such birth must have been undergone by the Buddhisatto himself.

Allied to such a wrong view, there is the aforesaid Alagadda Sutta, or Discourse on the Poisonous Snake. Herein we find a monk well-read and well-versed in Buddhistic scriptures. His name was Ariṭṭha, the former vulture-killer. He thought thus: "These householders enjoy the worldly pleasures; but still they are the gainer of the first, second, and third paths. The monks also look at visible things pleasing to the eyes, touch objects which feel soft to the body, and use soft cloth and rags. All these things are proper and permissible. Why are then the shape, sound, smell, taste, and touch of the women alone not proper and permissible? These are also proper and permissible... Why has the Master formulated and promulgated, with great enthusiasm as if he was confining the ocean, the first pārājikam? Herein there is no fault, no offence." The first pārājikam is about the sexual enjoyment punishable by excommunication. Such a wrong view was reported to the Master; the offending monk was called in; he was strongly reprimanded in the assembly of monks and disciples. And the Master then addressed the assembly and preached a sermon on the intolerability of such an adverse view.

Here we have the case of a perverse view arising out of an unchaste mind inclined to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. What is permissible to the laity cannot obviously be permitted to the clergy. The logic of Ariṭṭha is superficially naive; but it is materially harmful and dangerous to the very existence of the Buddhistic order of monks. From the meditative point of view also such an attitude of mind would blur the target of our

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endeavour in that direction. At least meditation is not a pursuit after sensual enjoyment; it is more serious than that; if we are so minded, the natural goal of meditation would equate with that of Prince Siddhārtha at least, if not that of the Bodhisattva later.

Although the above sub-sections would seem to be concerned mainly with the exposition of the Buddhistic tenet of impermanence, suffering, and non-ego, the commentary has rightly pointed out to the feeling as the only means of organising immaterial practices. An unbalanced poise or inattention to the feeling can distort these practices, the instances of which we find so clearly depicted in the above suttas. The main criterion of directing and evaluating almost all the types of Buddhistic meditation is as given repeatedly by the Buddha and quoted elsewhere above. It is "Na ca kinci loke upadiyati," that is, one is not to crave anything in the body or sphere, gross or subtle, small or large, inner and outer, physical or nominal (non-physical)." This mental frame or attitude would not stop at any object or subject met with or serving as a support in the progress of meditation. The habit or disposition thus formed and established will help us maintain a splendid poise in our meditation, so that we shall be able to avoid automatically any dogmatism traditional or metaphysical.

Three Aftermaths

The later two suttas of the four we selected from the suttas of reference mentioned earlier are important for three aftermaths or after-effects of the body, speech, and mind. I have rendered the Pāli term 'Saṅkhārā' used herein as aftermaths, rather than formations. The Pāli word Saṅkhārā has a wide range of application. Excepting matter, feeling, perception, and consciousness, all the rest of the dhammas are included in the khandha or heap of Saṅkhārā. In other words, all the fifty mental concomitants out of the fifty-two belong to Saṅkhārā-khandha, the remaining two being the vedanā or feeling and the perception or saññā. In Sanskrit the word is spelt as Sanskāra with a much less and limited range of application than what it has in Pāli. Even this number is the minimum shortened from those of the *Dhamma-Saṅgaṇi*.

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In its verbal form, the word means 'to do, to act'. Then it will be 'cetanā' or to act mentally. The Master says: "Cetanā aham, Bhikkhave, kammam vadām," meaning 'I speak cetanā, O Monks, as an action.' Thus the word means volition or willingness. But in the above context the term implies the effect after an action has been performed, or the accumulated after-effects, whence an action may stem. It is in the latter sense that I have used the word 'Aftermath' above. The Pāli term may not however be appropriately represented by the above word. Herein I follow in Buddhaghosa's footsteps approvingly, when he writes in the following commentary on Larger Vedalla Sutta as below: "Hence not insisting on 'byañjana' (or word), and relying upon the 'naya'(or method) of ācariyas (or learned teachers), the meaning should be closely examined; for the meaning is the refuge, not the byañjana (or word)."

The Larger or Mahā Vedalla, the 43rd Sutta, is very interesting, as we find a number of leading monks, such as Mahākoṭṭhita, Sāriputta, Mahākaccāna, Puṇṇa, Kumāra-kassapa, and Ānanda, discussing among among themselves on the higher meditative topics. The next or 44th sutta has the same name Vedalla, but it is called the culla or smaller one. The latter records an interesting series of questions and answers between a rich merchant named Visākha and his former wife who had become an enlightened Bhikkhuni or nun, Dhamma-dinnā. Visākha had already attained the stage of a non-returner in the path of supramundane knowledge. He paid a visit to the nunnery where the nun Dhamma-dinnā was staying. As he was himself so advanced in Buddhistic insight he wanted to know whether his former wife also realised what he had already done, or more or less than that. As an etiquette of the times and also as a sign of respect due to the order of the Buddhistic monks and nuns, he puts the questions adroitly and indirectly, not directly.

We are not, at this stage of our research, going to deal with the intricacies and complications of supramundane trances and contemplations which both these Vedalla suttas touch upon. We shall only treat of the three aftermaths of the body, speech, and mind both of them try to explain. The kāya-saṅkhārā or the bodily aftermath is the respirations. The commentary on the

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second discourse, Culla Vedalla, naively says that the respirations are connected to and based on the body; they appear or exist, if the body is there; they do not appear, if they body is not there. Buddhaghosa is seemingly unaware of the physiological fact as to why it is so. But the fact is simply before us. Our body needs respirations constantly and their stoppage means the death of our body and thereby our own decease. So the effect or result of our bodily actions is the respirations we are often aware of and sometimes not.

In the practice of prāṇāyāma, we try to lengthen the duration of the retention of breath; the normal duration of four seconds at each breath can be easily and quickly increased to thirty seconds with a little practice, but the practice of ānāpāna has nothing to do with such forcible retention of breath; it is enough in the latter practice to let the respiratory organ move naturally and smoothly. So the ānāpāna is never held to be a breathing exercise; it is merely a support for retaining memory constantly in mind. When we watch the respiratory movements in such a manner, they grow smoother and slower to a certain limit only, but not to that of prāṇāyāma. The former comes obviously under a samatha or quiet meditation, whereas the latter is a principal factor of Haṭha-yoga, or that of external practice in the eightfold systems of yoga described in the yoga philosophy of Patañjali.

The Buddhistic text and commentary invariably maintain that the respirations totally cease in the fourth form trance. The cessation of respiration is however natural and automatic in any deep state of meditation. It is not forced. When any adept monk is trying to enter the state of the cessation of consciousness and feeling, his speech aftermath or vitakka vicāra will at first cease. Then his bodily aftermath or respirations will stop. After this stoppage and during his trance, his mental aftermath or feeling and perception together with consciousness will cease and remain in cessation. When he is awakened from such a trance, the series or process of aftermaths is reversed; at first his mental aftermath will appear; then the bodily aftermath will arise; after this there will be seen the speech aftermath. This gradual process of cessation and re-appearance of these aftermaths is of prime importance for a correct understanding of the

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Buddhistic Nirodha Samāpatti or trance of cessation. The kāya-saṅkhārā or respiration is stopped or appears in between the other two aftermaths. The speech aftermath, or vitakka and vicāra, ceases first and re-appears last, whereas the aftermath of the mind or the feeling and perception together with consciousness ceases last, but re-appears first in the ninth trance of the Buddhistic meditative system of gradual trances.

Inadequate Derivation and Dilemma

The above four suttas of the *Majjhima-nikāya* out of the suttas referred to by Buddhaghosa for further study might have shown that his theme on vedanā quoted elsewhere is quite inadequate. His reference to these suttas is itself a proof of what we have said before. The glimpse of these discourses we have given above depicts a picture so full and rich that his theme falls very short even of a cursory view of a casual reader. When he knew that he could not represent the actual theme of these diverse subjects, he should not have referred to so many suttas in support of his own theme, as if they contained in substance the same. On the contrary, he should have plainly told us that the subject discussed in the commentary could be profitably studied and conclusions derived in the following suttas, while desisting from advancing his naive and common-place theme in the suttas referred to by him. It must have been clear from what we have shown above, that his theme does not throw any substantial light on the observation of the feeling, though he has in a way given us an insight into the importance of this observation.

In spite of inadequate derivation, Buddhagosa has provided us with valuable data, upon which we can build up our own theories about the Buddhistic verities, doctrines, and ideologies. Moreover he is exceptionally brilliant, whenever and wherever he finds a doctrinal point to elucidate. For example, in commenting on the Larger Vedalla Sutta, he amusingly refutes the position of a controversialist on the phraseology of the ninth trance as the cessation of sanna and vedayita or perception and feeling. It is as follows: "Some people say—Since one who attains and dwells in the Nirodha Samāpatti has been said to have only the citta-saṅkhārā stopped or checked, the citta or mind is not

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stopped. Hence this samāpatti or concentration is sa-citta-kā or mindful." Such a controversy would have certainly perverted the foundation of a nibbānic trance, technically known as "Saññā-Vedayita Nirodha Samāpatti" or the trance with the Cessation of Perception and Feeling.

This trance is held to be without any mental consciousness throughout its maintenance; but the technical term does not mention citta, mana, or viññāṇa in addition to the above two words, Saññā and Vedayita. He has brilliantly refuted this dilemma with two counter-questions too polemic to be inserted here. He seemingly hints at the omission by posing such questions. He should have however put forward a straight answer that the mental after-math, Saññā and Vedanā, is a mental concomitant and that they are invariably associated with the mental consciousness. As such the mention of these two cetasikas necessarily entails the mind as well. So when they cease, the mind also follows them in cessation. The omission further proves the authenticity of the canonical term, because the insertion of the wanted word might have been made quite easily. In addition to this, the sequence of these two words seems to lay stress on vedayita or feeling, the most important cetasika. For, the first cetasika or saññā ceases in a particular trance without perception, whereas the second one or vedanā ceases only in this ninth, ultimate, or Nibbānic trance.

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IX

Observation of Mind

Difficulty in Detection

THE RELATIVE text of citta-anupassanā in Sati Paṭṭhāna Sutta and vibhaṅga is briefly given; so is the relevant portion in the commentary. We do not find guidance for practising this observation in an effective way, or at least in a satisfactory manner. The best we can gather from the short stereotyped passages of the text seems to indicate that we have to watch the successive states of the mind in association with their moral qualities, and meditative and intuitive contents. The commentary mentions the categories of these qualities and contents only cursorily. The difficulty in detecting such subtleties is increased, when we remember that we have to detect them then and there by the mind itself, but keener than the mind obtaining in the then existing state. The commentary on Cittānupassanā in both the Sutta and Vibhaṅga says: "It is only the detecting of dhammas, and not the determining of them. Hence not a single state of supramundane mind is to be found in a single term here." But the mind of form and formless stages is mentioned and is to be watched. Evidently it is difficult to perform the observation in a practical manner.

It is to be understood here that we are going to organise an observation of our own mind and not to organise a trance that might have been comparatively easier and more practical. Here-

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in we are called upon to watch or observe the successive mental moments, as we were instructed to do in observing respirations in ānāpāna-sati. The purpose is the same, viz., the awakening, maintaining, and cultivating of memory. By deliberating over the mental states through vitakka and vicāra, we can go ahead a little farther, but not much farther. We shall be losing ourselves thereby in a turmoil of self-raised vitakkas and invigorated vicāras. Although not stated expressly in text and commentary, the practice must have been meant to be conducted with a silent and quiet mind. Such a mind would be necessarily without vitakka at least. But this observation is made to include all the mundane states of the mind, normal and supernormal, in the material, form, and formless planes. Obviously it would be a difficult task to detect, in such a wide mental field, every successive moment of the mind for any practiser of this kammaṭṭhāna.

Hence the Master has made it easier by classifying all the mental states into sixteen categories only; twelve of these categories fall in the material or kāmāvacara plane and hence are not very difficult to detect; only four out of sixteen belong to mental states higher than the ordinary ones. The mind is to be watched, when it is with or without its likes and dislikes, delusions or ignorance, and mental or physical idleness or uneasiness; and when it is busy in the day-to-day mundane works alone, not inclined to meditation, and not wishing for even partial liberation from worldly ills and turmoils. Such an observation of one's own mind can therefore be easily conducted. We may utilize vitakka also to detect each of these by naming it. The remaining four categories are, however, dectable in meditation only; but, since they do not arise in ordinary mental states, we are not called upon to detect them. We may, for practice, notice their absence or non-appearance. Thus we can go slowly but steadily ahead in this mental observation occupying an important and separate chapter in the *Sati-Paṭṭhāna Sutta*. As already mentioned, this famous discourse is most probably a consolidated kammaṭṭhāna to be practised according to one's own liking and capacity. Besides its meditative value, it can be of great use and value in our mundane life as well.

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X

Observation of Dhammas

Investigation

WHEN WE investigate the world and its experience, we find that the matter is different from its experience which we may call the mind. These two broad divisions are named rūpa and arūpa, or material and immaterial, in Buddhistic terminology. Rūpa is matter and material objects in its piercing and obstructing nature; it is capable of giving pain to our physical body; it is morally neutral; it has no support other than itself; it cannot be removed or destroyed by a mere mental cogitation. Arūpa on the other hand is mind and mental concomitants. It is further divided into four categories, consciousness, feeling, perception, and saṅkhārā. All of them vanish in the ninth trance almost equated with Nibbāna.

Thus Buddhism is mainly concerned with the latter, which we can annihilate through our mental endeavours, meditative and intuitive. Rūpa is the support of Arūpa. The connection of the latter with the former is through our thirsting for rūpa. Excepting this fundamental thirst, we may practically ignore rūpa. Consequently there does not arise any concern for metaphysical questions in early Buddhism. We are therefore mainly concerned with arūpa and its ramifications. The dhammas we are treating of in this section are virtually such ramifications investigated, classified, clarified, and taught to be

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observed and evaluated. It is therefore a mixture, as well as a culmination, of the observations of the body, feeling and mind. As such, vitakka and vicāra will have to be largely employed in observing the dhammas.

The dhammas are varied in connotation, as well as in denotation. The commentary on the Mūla-pariyaya, the first sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, gives us ten different meanings of the word "dhamma". It may mean the Buddha's precept, verity, samādhi, intelligence, nature, inherent quality, void, merit, offence, anything knowable, etc. A short instance from the text has been quoted for each meaning. In each case the context will determine the exact meaning. So in the *Dhamma-Dāyāda*, the 3rd sutta of the same Nikāya, the inheritor of the Dhamma will in the context mean the Buddha's supramundane insights including the Nibbāna itself. The commentary on this sutta gives us the same meaning as an exhaustive one. But generally the word conveys the meaning of something having a nature of its own. Thus we find almost all the Buddhistic terms, not particularly specified, conjoined to dhamma, as a compound word. Here the Master has, however, selected, out of many, only the most essential for the purpose of this observation.

They are five in number—five nivarana, five khandha, twelve āyatana, seven organs of enlightenment, four noble truths. The first of them is the hindrances to meditation. They are specially mentioned in connection with the first form trance. The next two are in the series of the importance trio of Khandha, Āyatana, and Dhātu. The fourth is the organs of meditation and insight to be created and developed, while the fifth or last is the fundamentals of Buddhism. It appears that this observation was taught as a refresher course to practical Buddhism.

Analysis

The first observation is that of the physical body, technically known as kāyā-anupassanā. Because the kāyā or body is gross, this observation is comparatively gross. But in reality the practice assumes a subtle character, when it deepens. It is claimed that the initial part, ānāpāna, leads one successively to the four form trances. The eyes must be open in observing

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the respirations, as otherwise the pattern of visible objects will not be seen in the form of a counterpart sign. When we are occupied with the remembering of breathings in and out, the objects will present themselves as a pattern before our eyes without the concept of their materiality striking our mind. This visual pattern thus passes into the form of a counterpart sign quite separate from the material concept of the object we might be inadvertently looking at. According to the Master's precept to Rāhula, the last round of respiration also stops or passes into the cessation of breathing with the memory of such a stoppage. This stoppage is taken as the fourth stage of form trance; but the knowledge of such a subtle stage may escape our detection in ānāpāna.

The next practice on the awareness of the body in different positions and motions is virtually the extension of the memory on the support of the body. The initial object of the physical body gradually assumes the shape of the nāmā kāyā or immaterial body, inasmuch as the concept of materiality slowly passes into indistinctness and finally, so to say, into oblivion. Since the purpose of these observations is not merely a sort of quietism, the remaining three parts of this observation are taken up and practised in order to purify the memory so much as to make it fit for approaching the nibbānic trance or insight. The Master constantly reminds the disciples attaching themselves to nothing whatsoever, as the of repeated sentence—"Na ca kinci loke upādiyati"—meaning 'one should not crave anything in the body or the world,' plainly signifies.

Standard Psychic Experience

To those persons who are not conversant or acquainted with the oriental, particularly the Buddhistic, approach to liberation, it may look strange that so much emphasis is put upon such an aloofness. It is so because liberation is sought through a completely detached mind. The detachment is taught to transcend anything gross or subtle, human or divine, natural or supernatural: even the bliss often mentioned is never meant to be physical or psychic; the bliss is something supramundane and free from lust, hatred and delusion. From our meditat ve point of view also, we constantly need such a guidance: we

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are not after a pursuit of pleasure or pain; our enterprise should be oriented to that of our pioneer Prince Siddhārtha to find out what the perfect good is and in our case what is the highest stage of meditation we can attain and maintain. The Master is the most reliable guide in this direction, because his search after truth did not stop at any stage of meditative achievement. His experience teaches us to keep ourselves aloof from anything gross or subtle, human or divine, past or future; he specially warns us against egocentric attachment. His information and conception of the cosmic world may not tally at points with our own, but the excellent quality of his meditative experience cannot be questioned at any point. Philosophy, as a logical exercise, may be adversely criticised, and Buddhist philosophy cannot be an exception. Meditation, as a series of psychic events, on the other hand, is never questioned so far as the bare experience is concerned. The Buddha's psychic experience can be regarded as a standard for other similar experiences to be compared and evaluated with.

Feeling and Mind

To resume the subject, the next observation of the feeling is so close to the preceding bodily observation that most of the latter will have, knowingly or unknowingly, to be performed by means of the former. When we constantly feel the body with a keen memory, there will be no occasion for vitakka and vicāra to arise. So the observation will be carried out without vitakka and vicāra. Because of the subtle nature of the feeling, it appears to have been not specifically mentioned in the observation of the body. But there are words, phrases, and sentences met with in the kāyā-anupassanā that indicate the agency of feeling for the observation of parts concerned. Thus, "Atthi kāyo ti", there is the body, and "So imam eva kāyam upasanharati", he applies (the impression gained through watching a putrid corpse) to this very body (of his own)—these sentences indicate the feeling as an effective instrument to perform these parts of the practice. As otherwise, vitakka or vicāra will have to be used for the purpose. Buddhaghosa in the commentary however misses the feeling, and

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mentions vitakka or vicāra. This example shows that our savant has mostly resorted to the literal interpretation of the textual portions, without elucidating their meditative implication.

The observation of the mind is subtler than that of the feeling. Hence Buddhaghosa is likewise reticent to give us any practical method to perform this important kammaṭṭhāna in his commentary. Since the quality and sentiment of the mental category are differentiated by moral, cognitive, and purposive criteria as well as that of feeling, it is plain that the feeling can be legitimately employed together with other criteria in detecting the mental states in this observation. It is not necessary to name each of them separately; it would be enough to recognise the states one by one as they happen to arise. Hence the feeling is a very useful device to organise the kammaṭṭhāna on the body, as well as on the mind. Buddhaghosa concentrates on Buddhistic tenets and dogmas so much as to rob these kammaṭṭhanas of their legitimate meditative values.

The fourth or last part of Sati-Paṭṭhāna Kammaṭṭhānas is the culmination of the preceding three observations, so far as the purpose of Sati-Paṭṭhāna practice is and should be understood. But the most practical observation is the first or kāyānupassanā; hence it should be popularized together with the already popular Ānāpāna Sati. The most efficient device for meditation and trance would be however the second or Vedanānupassanā, inasmuch as it very quickly subdues the arising of vitakka and vicāra. The third or Cittanupassanā can be at best conducted through following the mental sentiments one after another, keeping as far as possible the feeling constantly to mind, or virtually to memory. The practice of mental observation on the mind should be doggedly allied with that of vedanā, as otherwise we shall be confronted with self-raised vitakkas and invigorated vicāras so much as to nullify the speechless character of meditation and trance.

Synthesis

The commentary on Sati-paṭṭhāna Sutta says that the Master has told 'four sati-paṭṭhānas, neither less nor more than these'. Kāyānupassanā is gross and told for a disciple who is dull

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and of a greedy temperament as the path of purification or liberation. Vedanā-anupassanā is subtle and told for a disciple who is of a sharp mind and of a like temperament. For disciples of a philosophic temperament, cittānupassanā that is not very detailed is told for one who is dull; and dhammānupassanā that is very detailed for one who is of a sharp mind; these two are the path of purification for the two types of disciples respectively. Among disciples of samatha-yāna or a meditative turn of mind, the first sati-paṭṭhāna is told for a dull one, because it is easily attainable, and is the path of purification for him. For a disciple among them who is of a sharp mind and incapable (thereby) of staying in a gross ārammana or support, the second one is told likewise. On the other hand, for disciples of vipassanā-yāna or deliberative and discriminatory type of mind, the remaining two are the path of purification, the third sati-paṭṭhāna (or cittānupassanā) being (appropriate) for a dull mind and the fourth (or dhammā-anupassanā) for a sharp mind.

The above comments obviously display a lack of synthesis on these four observations, an unlikely supposition, specially when Buddhaghosa says later on: "As a skilled craftsman, wishing to make different articles and implements, breaks a big bamboo, after obtaining it, into four parts and makes these things out of the parts, the Master has similarly broken a single sammā-sati (or right memory) into four sati-paṭṭhānas . . ." Evidently the four observations are considered as a single whole and the textual flow also signifies the same. The merit and efficacy of these observations declared by the Master towards the end of this discourse indicate that the merit and efficacy are guaranteed only for the practiser of the whole kammaṭṭhāna. Thus the textual precept shows a single practice gradually ascending from simpler steps to complicated ones and culminating in the four noble truths, the fundamental fourfold formula of early Buddhism.

On the contrary, the commentary has tried to make each step of the whole culminate in the four truths, a laudable attempt but an unauthenticated supposition. Such an abrupt break of the whole has occasioned the lack of synthesis. The synthesis is however unmistakably discernible in the Master's

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pronouncement as regards the efficacy of these four observations mentioned elsewhere. In other words, the first observation on the body is, so to say, a practice of the undifferentiated body. Its differentiation continues in the feeling and mental observations. In the fourth one or the observation on dhammas, we are firstly taught to detect and to remove the five nivaraṇas or impediments to organising a trance. Then we learn to differentiate all the material and immaterial objects classified into rūpa, vedanā, etc., five khandhas or heaps and also as to how our craving for these dhammas turns them into the corresponding five upādāna-khandhas.

Upadana and Ayatana

These khandhas, if left to themselves, are regarded as pure dhammas and not hindrances. But, when we like or dislike them or are deluded concerning their impermanent nature by them, we turn them through our attachment and craving into the upādāna-khandhas binding us in their ever-increasing folds. In short, we find ourselves identified with them. The next practice on twelve āyatanas or enclosures differentiates the khandhas further into the six inner and the six outer categories with which we become directly concerned. The inner categories include our five organs of sense, viz., the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. The sixth organ is 'mana' or the mind, the seat of which is held to be 'hadaya' or the heart and not the brain. And the outer categories contain the five objects of the five senses, the sixth object of the mind is termed 'dhamma-āyatana'. So all our concepts, ideas, etc., will be spoken of as 'dhamma-āyatana' conceivable or knowable through the mind.

These twelve āyatanas in their turn deepen the craving further and create ten 'samyojanas' or whirling connections that draw us into an interminable round of births, in other words, into the never-ending turmoils of the world. The notables among them are māna or ego-complex, diṭṭhi or dogmatism, and avijjā or ignorance. It appears that the māna is not inherent in us; but, because of our improperly receiving the outer stimuli and inner deliberations, varying shades of ego and false identification with the outer objects or inner factors germinate and develop in us. The Master has therefore taught

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his disciples 'yoniso manasikāra' or properly keeping in the mind, not improperly, so very often in many discourses. The anattā or non-ego theory of Buddhism is understandable under the purview of such emphases and practices. The other two, diṭṭhi and avijjā, follow on from māna. For the ditthi is an improper position adopted concerning an ego, inner or outer, while avijjā is a mental disposition to accept an ego-complex without proper discrimination.

Organ of Memory

The fourth part of the observation on dhammas is the central kammaṭṭhāna for all meditationists. It contains the seven organs of enlightenment. The first organ is the sati fully dealt with in the four observations. The Master says at several places that the sati or memory is 'sabbatthikam' or a panacea or an all-fulfilling appliance. We have also found in the discussion of this principal topic that the sati or memory can be aroused, maintained, purified, and developed by resolutely conducting these practices taught in the *Sati-Paṭṭhāna Sutta*. It is the sati that is aimed at in ānāpāna practice. It is again the sati that is to be kept alertly before us, when we sit down to organise a trance. The sati, together with upekkhā or unattached poise, is sought to be completely purified in the fourth stage of the form trance. This is the trance that becomes the basic trance for obtaining supernormal powers and knowledges, for organising formless trances, and ultimately attaining the supramundane knowledge and the cessation of conssiousness and feeling.

The name and purport of Sati-Paṭṭhāna is decidedly indicative of the importance of sati. It appears that the word was prevalent as a factor of samādhi, and not only remembrance or memory. The word 'smriti', the Sanskrit form of sati, occurring in the 20th and 43rd sūtras of the first of the Pātāñjala *Yoga-sūtra*, signifies the Pāli meaning of sati closely. But the practice concerning sati must be acknowledged as a speciality of the Buddha. The organs of enlightenment applied to the seven items are seemingly to emphasize that they are to be stabilized and not merely to be practised casually off and on. Nevertheless we do not find herein any guidance towards the

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device of stabilizing them. The commentary quotes a passage from another sutta, in which the main emphasis is laid on the proper application of the mind to the dhammas underlying the organ. This sort of reference does not help us. Buddhaghosa suggests four rules, out of which the first, that is, sati-sampajjaññam, is rightly a good suggestion. This term and its practice occur in the third section of the same name under the first observation. It is as much as to say that we must be constantly aware of our bodily movements in order to stabilize this first organ of enlightenment.

Confusion of Terms

We have shown elsewhere above that some confusion of terms occurs in the suttas. For example, rūpa is used both for matter and rūpāvacara or form in the form trance and plane. Loke may mean the physical body, the material or immaterial world. Kāmāvacara bhūmi extends from the enigmatic hell, through our material world, to the six layers of heaven. Similarly the seven organs of enlightenment in the observation of dhammas are termed 'Satta Sambojjhaṅgāni' or seven angas of Sambodhi. But Bodhi or Sambodhi generally means or is understood to mean the perfect enlightenment of the Buddha. So Buddhaghosa tries to avert the confusion of the terms by explaining away the two terms separately and in an ordinary sense. Bodhi, says he substantially, is a 'bujhanaka satta' or a being who is to know. Sambodhi, on the other hand, is wherein persons from a beginner of vipassanā to a yogāvacara properly learn or know. Through this or the seven dhammic paraphernalia, the person properly knows, rises up from the sleep of defilement, or discerns the four noble truths; hence this accessory of dhammic paraphernalia is sambodhi. The text does not however differentiate the term, as our savant has done above in the commentary. There is nothing lost in the prestigious term, even if we regard the word as a general term for enlightenment, without bothering ourselves as to who gets or attains it.

Organ of Discrimination

The second organ of enlightenment is Dhamma-vicaya or

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the discrimination of dhammas. We should have legitimately expected an analysis of the meditative and intuitive dhammas herein. But the text is stereotyped. The commentary dwells on the need of cleanliness and that of keeping a balanced adherence, not to the seven organs of enlightenment, as we would have expected, but to the five indriyas or faculties. It is a sort of diversion from the subject, but a useful help to our purpose. Such a balanced poise amidst a multiple choice of Buddhistic meditative appliances and mental energies is advised in several discourses of the text as well. The novice is however not to worry about these niceties. There is no danger whatsoever in stabilizing any one of the five inner faculties, such as saddhā, viriya, sati, samādhi, and paññā, or delightful inclination, vigour, memory, trance or concentration, and intellectual penetration, respectively, so far as meditation is concerned.

It is obviously for the dogmatic purpose that Buddhaghosa warns us against our chances of falling into hell, if we are to develop the fifth faculty without balancing it with the first. For, in the presence of a weak saddhā, too much reliance on intellectual development may cause us to overlook meritorious actions, such as alms-giving, donations, etc. Such a lapse may result in being born in a 'niraya' or hell. An intellectual faculty of a meditative quality cannot be so disparaged as to lose sight of the social conscience as regards public donations and endowments and other humanitarian works in the modern world. He might be hinting at a wrong view of some other sect, when he refers to it as—"By the arising or arousing of mind alone, merit is done." The Pāli sentence—"Cittuppada-matteneva kusalam hoti"—meaning as above, may imply a Bodhi-citta. If so, such an idea is entertained in a certain sect of Mahāyāna Buddhism, but the merit of alms-giving is also highly emphasized in this sect as well.

As examples, Buddhaghosa refers to the story of Monk Vakkali concerning the unbalanced saddhā. For an instance of exceeding vigour, he advises us to read the story of Monk Sona. These two stories are recorded in the text. Both these monks were visited by the Master; they got the needful precept from him; and each of them got his wish fulfilled. The context of saddhā here means an intense delightful faith in the Buddha;

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but generally the term means a delightful inclination towards one's meditative or intuitive practice. The commentary of Vyāsa on this term occurring in the 20th sūtra of the *Yoga-sūtra* likewise explains saddhā or śraddhā as "Cetasah samprasādah" meaning as given above. In meditation, when we are delightfully inclined towards the practice of various devices as required from time to time, such an inclination will be spoken of as saddhā, not merely faith or belief in some supernatural power or divinity. Viewed in such a light saddhā becomes a factor of our natural disposition. This is a faculty of saddhā.

Organ of Vigour

This is the third organ of enlightenment, very important and easily comprehensible. Viriya, or vigour, is found among the five faculties mentioned above. It is also given in the five mental powers with the names corresponding to those of five faculties. In other enumerations as well, we come across viriya. Although this factor means endeavour and perseverance in meditation and insight, the technique of channelling the energy into different areas is quite characteristic of Buddhism. Buddhaghosa quotes the instance of a monk named Mahāmitta of latter times plausibly in Ceylon. The monk overheard the talk between a Mahā Upāsikā and her daugher concerning her care for the supply of better food to him than her own. This care indirectly roused him to vigour. He determined not to taste this intended food without attaining the goal of arhatship. Resolutely applying vigour to the practice he sat down in his cell, and ultimately achieved the goal. There are many instances of such achievements brought about comparatively more quickly.

Thus the goal of arhatship does not seem to be very difficult to achieve, if one applies vigour to attain it. To all appearances, this sort of goal is an intellectually firm conviction of one's own non-existence as an ego, soul, or separate sentient entity or individuality. From a close analysis of matter and mind, the psychic body and the physical one termed 'nāma-rūpa', or dhammas such as 'khandha āyatana dhatu', we may know that our individual existence is illusory; this knowledge is not enough; we have to be firmly convinced of such a verity. Second-hand

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knowledge and dogmatic acceptance alone cannot convince us of this truth to a degree required to attain arhatship. A mere certainty of this knowledge also does not make one an arhat. From a scrutiny of textual and even commentatorial accounts regarding such attainments, we can easily derive the conclusion that a monk, so to say, directly and distinctly felt the non-existence of his ego at the moment. It must have been so pronounced as to make the monk feel that he is extinguished for ever. From the meditative point of view such a direct feeling of non-existence is very important. Apart from its philosophic significance, such an extraordinary feeling is worth experiencing. The Master's way of applying viriya or vigour is unmistakably in the right direction.

Method of Applying Viriya

The method of applying viriya or vigour is generally divided into four steps. These steps are found in many suttas and a few vibhaṅgas. The stereotyped form of statement in describing these steps might draw little or only cursory attention from us, in spite of the great importance attached to them by the Master. The suttas, such as Bhaya-Bherava, Pāsarāsi or Ariya-pariyesana, Mahāsaccaka, Bodhirājakumāra, Sangārava, the third, 26th, 36th, 85th, and 100th ones of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, respectively, record the early reminiscences of Prince Siddhārtha and Bodhisattva. These suttas amply show that the Master himself had adopted these steps and employed them thoroughly before his perfect enlightenment. A similar method is discernible as regards vitakkas in another reminiscent sutta, Dvedhā-vitakka, the 19th one of the same nikāya. The commentary on these suttas is very helpful to follow these steps with elucidatory matters given therein.

In order to present the subject in an easily comprehensible manner and within a short space, we shall deal only with its most salient features touching meditation alone. We should firstly try to find out the present quality of our mental concomitants. They might be unfavourable or favourable to meditation. Because of every dhamma being subject to a general law of momentariness, it may appear, remain, and disappear in a sort of momentary succession. We are generally conscious of it,

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when it remains, stands, or is present. This moment has not been satisfactorily measured in the Buddhistic psychology, though the commentary and the *Visuddhi-magga* make the life-span of a material object equivalent to seventeen mental moments The commentary on the *Khandha Vibhaṅga* gives two similes to show this equivalence. One of them is hitting the branch of a fruit tree. At a single stroke the fruit and leaves (joined to them) separate and fall down the stalk of the tree. Because of the heaviness of the fruit, it falls down earlier on the ground; whereas the leaves, due to their lightness, fall down later. The fruit is compared to the sixteen mental moments, while the leaves (joined to the fruit) are compared to the matter that disappears at the 17th mental moment. The simile and comparison herein may not seem to be appropriate.

The other simile is to the point in this respect. There are two men; one of them has crooked feet; the second one has large feet. They start walking at the same time and traverse the path in equal time. But the first man with the crooked feet makes sixteen paces forward, while the other places only a single pace at the same time. Thus they walk at the same speed; neither of them can surpass the other. The first is compared to the sixteen mental moments, and the second to the matter, the 17th pace of the former being synchronized with a unit of pace of the latter. We may accept this theory tentatively for the time being; but the average duration of each mental moment as given in the commentary of the Dhamma-saṅgaṇi cannot be so easily accepted; for the duration is too long and uncertain. It is the time when the eyes can see things in a dark room, after we enter it from the open light; or it is the time required to get our eyes adjusted to the open light, after we open the window of a dark room and look outside through it.

In spite of any controversy over the number or the duration of such mental moments, we may safely accept that there are mental moments upon which our mental life operates. We shall, in the beginning of our practice, meet with mental concomitants rather unfavourable to meditation. We are to mark their appearance and disappearance. This is the clue to knowing how they appear and disappear on the mental horizon. Since it is we ourselves who make them rise and set, we can discern some

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causes of such phenomena in our own mind. They cannot go into and go out of our mind without our permission at their own sweet will, nor can they remain in our mind longer than their momentary life-span.

When the causes are thus found out after some observations on their working, we should remove them as best we can, so that they may quickly go out and get no chance of rising again. Vigour is persistently applied to the practice. It is not easy ordinarily. Hence the Master has repeatedly emphasised viriya for the purpose. The momentariness of the mind gives us hope, and the applied vigour gives us assurance that we can do so. Once we are successful in driving out the impediment, our path becomes easy. Vigour is applied for a specific purpose, and the faculty of vigour is a habit of being able to channel it, while the organ of vigour is, so to say, an established or stabilized habit of doing so. We shall have anyhow to bring vigour to bear upon the concomitants we do not like. There is no way other than applied vigour for their removal or eradication from our mental field.

We may also find such mental concomitants that are favourable to meditation. We should mark them as such and watch their appearance in and disappearance from our mental field off and on. They are also not free from our control. It is we ourselves who bring them on and make them fade out and disappear. There must be some causes for this phenomenon. Vigour is applied to observe, identify and organise the causes favourable to meditation. Through the application of vigour again, we have to remove the causes responsible for their fading out and disappearance. Not only this, we are required, the Master says, to develop them as best we can.

The five nivaraṇas or impediments to trance mentioned above are to be removed, as stated in the previous paragraphs. The discrimination of dhammas under the second organ is likewise done. The organ of memory is also similarly aroused, maintained, and developed. In short, all the organs of enlightenment are aroused, channelled, and developed through the instrumentality of viriya. There are several ways given in the text and suggested in the commentary for the different organs, but most of them are stereotyped. The method summarily described above will,

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I hope, be a sufficient guide to any would-be practiser of meditation in modern times.

Organs of Joy and Composure

The fourth organ is Piti or joy. It will be recalled that one of the principal factors of the first form trance and also of the second one is Piti or joy. Joy automatically begins to over-flood the mind and thence the body in the first and second trances. But herein we are to find out the causes of its appearance and to develop it by organising concomitants favourable to it. For joy is very helpful to organise a trance quickly. This joy is pure and not mixed with worldly enjoyment. The commentary on the *Dhamma-sangani* records an instance of an overwhelming joy. By dint of this a certain girl in Ceylon was lifted up from her house and, floating on the air, was set down on the ground of a Buddhistic monastery. The instance may be a mere tale told to show the virtue of religious joy, but the upsurge of its buoyancy is a common experience. The commentary on both the *Sati paṭṭhāna* sutta and vibhaṅga suggests eleven means of producing and developing this pure joy.

They are the seven remembrances out of the usual ten, such as those of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, Sila or Virtue, Cāga or renunciation, Devatā or heavenly beings, upasama or tranquillity. It is to be noted that the remaining three not included herein are the remembrances of death, observations of the body and the respirations. But the latter two are productive of a form trance; and one of its main factors is joy; hence the omission of at least these two remembrances is not to be taken seriously. Even the realisation of marana-anussati or remembrance of death or dying is not without joy. As a matter of fact, the successful organisation of any kamma-ṭṭhāna gives us joy. The remaining four suggestions are the association with pious persons, dissociation from impious ones, reviews of pleasing suttas, and an absorbing interest in them. The stereotyped form of the precept given by the Master is however "Yoniso manasi-kāra bahuli-kāro" meaning 'proper application of mind and development' of dhammas inherent in the particular organ of enlightenment. It is a general guidance and gives us greater latitude of practice suited to our modern environments.

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The fifth organ is Passaddhi or composure of body and mind. The Master's precept was given above. The commentary adds seven dhammas to it. They are the use of nice nutriment, comfortable adjustment to the climate and weather, convenient movements and activities; 'majjhatta-payogo' or literally balanced exercise of energy, but the meaning given here is the reviewing of one's own and other's actions already done; association with gentle persons, dissociation from unruly ones; and lastly an absorbing interest in attaining composure of body and mind. The Master's dictum, "Pīti-manassa kāyo passambhati", meaning 'The body of a person whose mind is joyful gets composed', found in many suttas, must be our guidance. The joy experienced in the first form trance automatically makes the body and mind composed; but here we are taught to generate and develop this organ within us, apart from its automatic manifestational nature in a trance. Thus, although meditative joy and composure will be generally experienced collectively in a trance, each of them is separately recognised here for the generation and development of specific organs of enlightenment. In other words, we are to form a habit of making our body still and our mind calm whenever and wherever we need to do so.

Organs of Samadhi and Upekkha

The last two organs are those of samādhi or trance and upekkhā or neutral poise. Samādhi is generally taken for the four gradual trances or the three categorical trances. The latter are the trances with vitakka vicāra, with vicāra only but without vitakka, and without both vitakka and vicāra. As an organ of enlightenment, samādhi is to be generated and developed to such a degree that it may become a habit of ours to organise it at will. Obviously such a habit is difficult to form. It should not however discourage us, because we are taught here only to observe the presence or absence of such an inner organ within us. If there is an absence, we should try to create an active interest to generate the organ. Should we find its germination or presence in our mind, we are to develop it.

In this context the Master's dictum that the sati or memory is a panacea is to be borne in mind. These four observations are virtually the means of generating, purifying, and developing

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the organ of memory. An alert memory is itself a beginning of samādhi. For the precept of the Master stipulates that we are to keep our memory in front of us, whenever and wherever we sit down for the practice of any kammaṭṭhāna. "Parimukham satim upaṭṭhapetvā" meaning the above passage, is an oft-repeated piece of advice of the Master. The commentary on the Jhāna-vibhaṅga, commenting on this phrase, says that the memory is to be directed towards the kammaṭṭhāna or that the memory is to be kept nearabout the face. The middle spot of the upper lip, where the breath through the nose strikes it, is to be taken, so says the commentator. The phrase given in the Vibhaṅga text means however the front of the nose or the nimitta (sign) of the face. But the phrase quoted above from the sutta text means neither the tip of the nose, nor the spot at the middle of the upper lip; it is simply 'parimukham' or 'round the face' or in front.

As a matter of fact, the Master's precept, "parimukham satim upaṭṭhapetvā", or having kept the memory around or in front, is most neutral and in consonance with his meditative posture. When we sit down for organising a trance, samādhi, contemplation, or intuitive deliberation, the position of the eyes naturally tends to rest just a little farther from the nose-tip in the open space, or the air. It is not at the nose-tip, nor at the middle of the upper lip. If the eyes are drawn a bit inward, it will be on the space just outside the facial surface. The latter position can be expanded so as to conform with his injunction. So we see that the commentator's explanation clearly shows a later vogue, quite different from the earlier tradition. The Master cannot ask us to concentrate on a nose-tip that gives a heavier pressure on the eye-balls, eye-globes, and eyelids than what we feel in a natural position described above.

The means advocated by the Master in the related subject is the samatha or tranquillization and non-deviation, properly adverted to. In fact these two devices are the contributing factors of a trance or samādhi. Hence we need not worry over the problem of these devices or aids; what we need is nothing more than the samādhi in its full manifestation. Let us try to organise it, the devices will appear one after another. Even the eleven pieces of advice given in the commentary are not extra-

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ordinary. They come one by one, without our worrying over them. For the practice of samatha, jhāna, samāpatti, or samādhi should be pure, free, and untrammelled; it will disclose its own secrets to us; any extraneous matters, such as much attention to personal fashion, social engagements, household affairs, etc., are to be avoided as much as possible.

Upekkhā literally means indifference. But as a factor of trance or as an organ of enlightenment, the term is generally taken to indicate a middle position of mental disposition. A neutral poise of mind would better express its purport and purpose so far as meditation and insight are concerned. Its purity is achieved only in the fourth stage of form trance, when the latter becomes a basic trance for organising supernormal knowledges and powers. As an organ of enlightenment, we are taught to form a habit of looking at worldly events and affairs without any bias, prejudice or self-interest. It is not a very difficult mental poise. In meditation however it is not so very easy to maintain amidst the meditative joy and pleasure. Without such a habit of neutrality we may be lost in our mental elation due to some achievement in meditation.

The text here is brief. The commentary gives us five aids, but they are commonplace. The commentator however adds, at the end of each organ, that the perfection of the organ is secured only by the contemplation of the path of arhatship, the seventh stage of supramundane enlightenment. The supramundane complex in the Buddhistic text, commentary, and literature is the greatest hurdle to surmount for every one of us, layman or monk, novice or savant, beginner or adept. Nevertheless this feature of Buddhism should not discourage us in our practice of meditation. For none at present can definitely declare that he or she has attained even the first stage of supramundane knowledge or insight, not to speak of the seventh or eighth stage of the latter. There is no such scarcity in the field of meditation. The highest stage of meditation can, even at present, be experienced and expressed without any fear or compunction.

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XI

Four Noble Truths—A Meditative Revelation

General Notions

BUDDHISTIC PRINCIPLES have been variously presented and explained. This variety has been channelised into many classifications giving birth to specific categories quite different from other systems of thought. Scholars have tried and failed to synthesize these principles into a philosophic whole, in spite of the Buddha's refusal to admit the least tinge or semblance of dogmatism. The least suggestion or conception of Diṭṭhi or philosophic dogma is unpalatable to his taste. Numerous suttas bear witness to this verity in early Buddhism. Our conception, for example, of the middle way adopted and taught by the Master is not the same as he appears to have realised and expressed in the suttas. The midway between two extremes cannot obviously be determined satisfactorily, far less accurately. Such an unsatisfactory and inaccurate path cannot be conceived to have been advocated and preached by the world-teacher of unequalled genius and enlightenment. The famous term 'Majjhima Paṭipadā' literally a midway, cannot therefore be taken as we may like it to convey the meaning to suit our conception.

Fourfold Scheme

The four noble truths are another example. They have been

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ordinarily compared with the fourfold scheme of Patañjali's Yoga philosophy, as described in the eleven sūtras from the 16th to the 26th sūtras of the second part of the *Yoga-sūtra*. The comparison is only superficially similar but fails in fundamentals. For instance, the 3rd sūtra of the first part and the 20th and 25th sūtras of the second part define, in effect, that our pure self, the seer, is only the seeing; and that 'Hānam', the ultimate goal or destination, is 'kaivalyam', or the absolutely lonely state of the 'drisi' or seeing. This conception has been positively confirmed in the concluding 34th sūtra of the last, or fourth, part of the *Yoga-sūtra*. It is plain that such a conception is foreign to the corresponding third noble truth, 'Dukkha-Nirodha Ariya-Sacca', of the Buddhistic system. The goal of the former would be included in the first noble truth, 'Dukkha Ariya-Sacca', of the latter.

Dissimilar Similarity

The Master's viewpoint regarding conceptions such as the above can be plainly seen and unequivocally understood in the first suttas of the *Digha* and *Majjhima nikāyas* as well. Moreover, the conception of the Master's Nibbāna is fundamentally different from that of its Sanskrit form, Nirvāṇa, as conceived and defined in other oriental systems of philosophy. Accordingly the eightfold path of the *Yoga-sūtra* is also basically different from that of Buddhism. The cause of dukkha or suffering appears however to be not very dissimilar in both the systems. The cause of suffering is 'samyoga' or the close connection between the seer and the seen, as told in the 17th sūtra of the second part of the *Yoga-sūtra*. Explaining this term further in the 23rd sūtra, it is said that this 'samyoga' causes the realisation of the two entities, 'Puruṣa' and 'Prakriti', the seer and the seen, or in other words, the soul and the mind-cum-matter. Again the cause of the latter in the 24th sūtra is said to be 'avidyā' or ignorance. It is also a general term to signify the cause of bondage in most oriental systems.

The Pāli term 'avijjā' is akin to its Sanskrit form 'avidyā'. The first term of the twelve links of the dependent origination is also 'avijjā'. So the cause of suffering would be 'avijjā' in Buddhism as well. But the Master goes deeper and says that it is

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'taṇhā' or an inherent desire or liking; it is virtually 'āsava', due to which 'avijja', or ignorance or delusion, originates. Moreover, the conception of a purely free agent such as 'puruṣa', or the soul, is foreign to Buddhism, as has been already mentioned. Hence the cause of suffering is not exactly the same in both the systems of thought. In Yoga philosophy, the conception of the close connection and also the realisation of 'puruṣa' and 'prakriti' does not seem to be free from dogmatism. On the other hand, the 'taṇhā', or liking, in the Master's precept, can be practically detected and checked in one's own mind.

Process of Revelation

The Buddha speaks of the four noble truths, as if they were revealed to him as a supernormal knowledge or a supermundane insight. But the recorded deliberation of the Master at least over the first two noble truths, the suffering and the cause of the suffering, shows that the process of deliberation was logical. None of us can possibly deny the existence of suffering in the world. We might also discern that the cause of suffering is either our excessive desire or our inability to cope with its sources and factors. We become however indifferent to the cause and try to avert the suffering. The reason for such indifference is the lack of visualization of suffering. The Master has tried hence to bring before us all sorts of suffering, physical or mental, actual, or imaginary, gross or subtle, conceivable or inconceivable.

Now the question arises as to how he visualized the subtle and inconceivable suffering in the form and formless trances. These supernormal trances are generally experienced and described as being full of joy, pleasure, pure calmness, and deep concentration. He has nowhere said that he inferred the subtle from the gross, or that he learnt it from some authorities. It was reportedly his own direct experience. Even the first truth was not revealed to him during his six years' austerities. The revelation came to him only when he had discarded the penances and resorted to and developed the first form trance. The text generally says that he directed his mind, purified in the fourth form trance, towards the two supernormal knowledges of his own and other people's past lives and realised the import of the round of such past lives. Then he turned his attention to the third knowledge

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for the eradication of āsava, or the fundamental sap of defilement, craving, and delusion. The process of this third or last knowledge is invariably found to be the detection of the four noble truths.

This version of his enlightenment leaves a few questions unanswered. For example, the detection of 'āsava' in the formless trances can be accomplished only when these trances are organised and afterwards reflected upon. The vivid realisation of the third noble truth, the cessation of suffering, is possible only in the ninth stage of the nine trances terminating in the Cessation of Consciousness and Feeling. Although the third truth can also be intuitively realised by means of insight, the Buddha's firm pronouncement regarding its attainment must have stemmed from the ninth trance rather than from the mere insight. Hence we have to stick to the thesis we dwelt upon in the first phase of this research. It was that the Shākya Prince Siddhārtha or the Bodhisattva, organised the gradually ascending form and formless trances on the firm foundation of the first trance he had long before attained under the rose-apple tree in Kapilavastu. Gradually transcending the form, he must have attended to the formless trances. This is evident from the passage of King Milinda's Questions relating to the highest merit of the two meals offered to the Master and mentioned in the first phase.

His disposition, aloof and unattached, was characteristically appropriate to trancend the different barriers of intervening trances from the first to the last one. It appears to be improbable that the Bodhisattva should have stopped at the fourth form trance, without transcending the barrier of forms; and instead he should have diverted his attention to the knowledges of the past lives, not exactly necessary for the third knowledge, or for realising the cessation of consciousness and feeling, or for the contemplation of the four noble truths. Supposing that he did stop at the last form trance and therefrom made a detour of the past lives and then attained the third knowledge, the destruction of āsava, he would have naturally felt neither any need for nor an inclination to organising the formless trances. Moreover, the Cessation of Consciousness and Feeling, the culmination of the formless trances, would have been left unorganised by him.

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This sort of supposition would create an insolvable problem in the Buddhistic meditative system.

Evidence

Hence the natural sequence of the Bodhisattva's trances must have been the form, formless, and cessational trances. The supernormal knowledge first and then the supermundane knowledge and insight should have followed the last stage of the gradual trances. The validity of such a lead can be discerned in a number of discourses and passages. One of them is the concluding portion of the Nivāpa, the 25th sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. The same meaning is implied in the Gāvi-Upamā Sutta, or the cow-simile discourse, in the Nine-item Nipāta of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. But the most definite assertion and evidence is found in the Tapussa Sutta of the same Nipāta and Nikāya. The account of the latter discourse is very interesting and also confirmatory to our lead.

Tapussa Sutta

The Master was once sojourning in Uruvelakappa, a town in the country of the Mallas. After the begging and taking of meal, the Master said to Ānanda, the attendant monk, "Here may you stay by yourself, Ānanda! While I enter the great forest for the daytime meditation." The monk obeyed and remained there. Then the Master, entering the great forest, sat down beneath a certain tree near its trunk for the daytime meditation. At that time a householder named Tapussa approached Ānanda . . . . and said: "Reverend Ānanda! We are householders enjoying the worldly pleasures . . . To us, sir, homeless life looks like the bottom of a waterfall . . . ." The monk took the householder with him and went up near to the Master and reported to him the talk held between them.

The Master said in reply: "So is it, Ānanda! It is so, Ānanda! It was so with myself too, Ānanda. Previous to my enlightenment, while I was still unenlightened and was only a Bodhisatto, I also did think . . . . the homeless life is good, the secluded state is good. . . . " Then the Master related how he consecutively organised the four jhānas of form trances, āruppās or formless trances, and the cessation of consciousness and feeling.

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After this account, he said: "Having discerned through paññā or intuitive intelligence, my āsavas were totally destroyed." The sequence of nine trances and the destruction of āsavas stated in this discourse clearly shows that the Bodhisatto did at first organise the nine gradual trances and afterwards reflected on his meditative achievements. Thereupon he detected the āsavas and destroyed them completely.

Continuing the discourse, the Master said: "Until I, Ānanda! in this manner organised these nine anupubba-vihāra samāpattiyo, or gradual trances, in anuloma-patiloma, or ascending and descending order and also arose therefrom, I did not claim and declare, amongst all the peoples of the cosmic world human and divine. . . . . that I was fully enlightened of the ultimate perfect enlightenment." Asserting his full attainment of these trances in these very words, he said: "Since I did verily, Ānanda! organise these nine gradual trances in this manner in the ascending and descending order and also arise therefrom, I did therefore, Ānanda! claim and declare, amongst all the peoples of the cosmic world human and divine. . . . . that I am fully enlightened of the ultimate perfect enlightenment. Knowledge and also vivid insight appeared to me: unshakable is the liberation of my mind; this is the last birth; there is now no rebirth." The last passage is the usual expression of the attainment of the firm arhatship as well.

Comparison and Contrast

The above discourse is an exceptional one, so far as the Master's attainment of enlightenment is concerned. Usually the text records the four form trances and then the three knowledges, without giving the four formless trances and the cessation of consciousness and feeling. On the contrary, this Tapussa sutta does not mention the first two knowledges of the past lives of his own and other peoples. The commentary on both types of suttas does not try to reconcile the bifurcation of the line of progress from the fourth form trance. The tradition of the four Nikāyas seems to differ in some instances. This important difference is one of them. There are several instances in which such differences present difficulties for smooth reconciliation of the facts. Under these circumstances, if it were only a matter of

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religious reverence, we could have glossed over it with some pious embellishments as the commentary has often done. But in a system of meditation we cannot admit any point without examining it, as fully as our sources textual or commentatorial permit or give us latitude to do. The commentary is often helpful, but sometimes it is misleading and even ludicrous. The text will have to be taken at any rate as authoritative; but the stereotyped form of statement does quite often occasion great despair. Most probably the need for recitation brought about such a large number of stereotyped forms and peyyālas or repetitions. Otherwise, we would have got at least a few valuable versions of the gradual trances. Those versions might have given us some unmistakable indications and leads towards their practical organisation.

With all our respect and admiration for the invaluable contribution to and service in the propagation of Buddhistic literature in the Pāli language, done and accomplished by our erudite savant, Buddhaghosa, his certain complexes have made the simple teaching of the Master much more, and ostensibly more, dogmatic than that of the original suttas. His knowledge and information about the old commentary on the Pāli text are so vast and his erudition has woven them in such a matrix that we have often to follow his commentary blindly even when we are instinctively aware of the unpalatable pattern of his dogmatism and scholasticism. It is not easy to contradict even a single remark he makes in his works. To do so, we have to study several suttas and the commentary on them on the relative topic. Fortunately for us, he has left some discrepancies open and unsynthesized even in his own commentary, to say nothing of the textual divergence from his viewpoint.

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XII

Sacca Vibhaṅga

Classification

THE FOUR noble truths are only briefly described in the section of the observation of the dhammas in the Sati-Paṭṭhāna Sutta of *Majjhima-nikāya*. We find the same description in the *Dīgha-nikāya* under the title of the Mahā Sati-Paṭṭhāna Sutta, with the only difference that the sub-section of the suffering is much more fully given herein than the corresponding one in the *Majjhima-nikāya*. But the exhaustive description is found in the Sacca-vibhaṅga of the second book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The commentary on this Vibhaṅga occupies 27 pages, whereas that of the former takes only a paragraph, referring to the *Visuddhi-magga* for details.

The text of this Vibhaṅga is very similar to that of the relative suttas, but the commentary on this Sacca-Vibhaṅga is full of interesting and elucidatory matters. The four noble truths are classified into twelve ways for exposition. They are the division, derivation, characteristics, and determination of meaning through examples, fixed numeration neither less nor more than four, consecutive order, function, inclusiveness, similes, fourfold analysis kinds of voidness, and mutually agreeing and disagreeing elements. It is plain to see that the classification is apparently exhaustive, but practically confusing. Buddhaghosa should have given a clear definition of each of the principal terms at first. Thereafter he should have treated each of them separately

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Then only would his classification as regards the complex ways and elements have been clearly and usefully understood and made comprehensible.

Analysis

We come to know, from the tenth way of his classification, that is, the fourfold analysis, that the dukkha or suffering and the ariya-sacca or the noble truth are quite separate terms. For example, he says, the Master's dictum, "Whatever is impermanent, that much is the suffering," indicates the suffering, but it is not the noble truth. Nirodha or the cessation is the noble truth, but it is not the suffering. On the other hand, the five mind-cum-matter 'upādāna-khandhas' or grasped heaps are wholly both the suffering and the noble truth, excepting the taṇhā or desire itself. The dhammas associated with the eightfold path and the fruits of the renunciated life are neither the suffering nor the noble truth.

Dogmatic Verse

Something like dogmatism is to be found in the eleventh way, that is, the kinds of voidness. The commentator says: "Metaphysically all the truths are void or devoid of the perceiver, feeler, doer, the liberated one, and the goer." Then he quotes a verse, which says:

> The suffering is only there; none is the sufferer. The doer is none; the deed alone exists. There is the liberation; liberated is no person. The path is there; the goer does not exist.

The enigmatic theory exposed in the above stanza stems from the non-ego conception of Buddhism. Nevertheless, the Master has nowhere uttered such a dogmatic passage or verse.

Buddhaghosa here and there quotes verses without reference to their source. These verses appear to have been taken from some traditional literature current in the Buddhistic Order to which he belonged. Instead of giving us his views in plain words, he sometimes quotes verses, apparently enigmatic, but substantially simple. In the third way of the above classification, that is, the characteristics, he says that the characteristic of the truth of the suffering is giving pain, that of the truth of the

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cessation is peacefulness, and that of the truth of the path is safely carrying or crossing over. Then in the fourth way of the determination of meaning through examples, he quotes a verse of five stanzas defining the truth in a pseudo-enigmatic manner.

As a sample, the verse in short says:

> Because of not giving no pain is the suffering, there is none other than the suffering that gives pain. By the rule of giving pain therefore it is held to be the truth. There is no suffering without none other than that, and not that therefrom; by the rule of the cause of suffering it is the truth poisonous. There is no peacefulness through none other than Nibbāna; for the peaceful is not what is not that thence. By the rule of peacefulness it is the truth. There is no crossing over by none other than the path, and that is not also incapable of making one cross over; due to the presence of capacity to make one cross over, it is therefore recognised as the truth . . . .

[The verse in short says: This verse of five stanzas is also quoted verbatim in the 16th chapter of the *Visuddhi-magga*, without elucidating its gist. Our savant might have thought that the verse was plain and clear by itself, but we found that it was not so. We shall try to give the gist of this metrical passage as follows;

> Because it gives pain, it is called suffering, and the suffering itself gives pain. For the reason it is called the truth. There is no sufforing without pain, and the suffering is from pain. Due to this cause it is called the truth (of the cause). There is no peacefulnes without Nibbāna, and Nibbāna is peaceful because of peacefulness. For this reason it is the truth (of the cessation of suffering).
>
> There is no crossing except through the path, and the Path is what efforts crossing. For this reason it is recognized as the truth (of the Path].

It is clearly seen that the double negatives and the repetition of the same idea in another form are used merely for emphasis. The commentator could have made the import of the verse simpler

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by giving the gist in plain words. In presenting this sample to the reader, I have tried to show that a difficult subject is made more difficult by the style of expression found in the commentary.

Refutation of Other Views

Buddhaghosa is said to have translated the old Sinhāli commentary into Pāli. He himself says, in the six stanzas from the 5th to the 10th of the opening section in the *Papancasūdani*, that he is translating the 'Aṭṭha-kathā' from the Sīhala-Bhāṣā into the pleasant language suitable to the system of the Canon. In doing so, he further says that he will express the purport, after cancelling or removing the repetitions in the former. He says also that he is following the traditional tenets of the monks of the Mahā-vihāra Monastery (in Ceylon). But from the study of his commentaries it becomes clear that he had done more than a mere translation and a curtailment therefrom. He has added many things of his own. These additions are not very difficult to detect and put up for scrutiny. Moreover, the *Visuddhi-magga* is entirely his own creation as a reference-work for particular topics in the Canon, not dealt with in detail in his commentaries. Thus from the viewpoint of the commentary, the independent Pāli work *Visuddhi-maggo* becomes the sole authority for the Buddhistic interpretation of virtue, meditation, and insight. We have seen so far that we cannot accept such an unchallenged position of his commentary; much less can we accept that of his independent work.

This reference work is valuable only as an aid to understanding the particular topics of the Canon, from his own point of view. Since he had full access to the old literature in the Sinhalese language and we have none at present, he is to be followed to that extent only and no farther nor deeper than that. If we exceed this limit, we shall be replacing the Master's words with Buddhaghosa's interpretation alone. Specially in the practical field of meditation, Buddhaghosa has to offer us little guidance of practical utility. It is only in the academic field of the specific type he is interested in that his scholarly help cannot be matched with our little knowledge of ancient lore in the original Prākrit or Pāli.

To resume, the seventh way of his exposition of the four-

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noble truths is very interesting for two reasons. One reason is the refutation of not only the classical dogmas, but also the theories of the principal oriental philosophies. The other is the most important one; because he quotes the Master's dictum, "Whoever, O Monks! sees the suffering also sees the cause; he also sees the cessation and also the path;" and he tries to explain the apparent enigma by his logical solution that it is due to the support of Nibbāna. This seventh way is that of function. He says that there are two kinds of knowledge of the truth. One gained through the learning of, or listening to, the scriptures. The other is obtained through intellectual penetration, which is also supramundane.

The first kind of knowledge is mundane. Due to overpowering disturbance, the knowledge of suffering lands one in the ego-complex identification of the self. Similarly, the knowledge of the cause lands one in the theory of annihilation. In the same way the knowledge of the cessation lands one in the dogma of eternality, while the knowledge of the path lands one in the acceptance of inactivity views. These are classical wrong views often met with in the suttas and their commentaries. As an alternative, he gives us other four perverted views. They are the perversions in the suffering, the result or effect of past desire, and in its cause, and in its cessation, and in the path leading to the cessation.

The perversion in the cause is, says he, the view that the world comes into existence through the Issara (God), padhāna (prakriti, or fundamental universal substance), kāla (time), sabhāva (nature), etc. It is the identification of the cause in the non-cause and therefore the perverted view in the real cause of the suffering. The perversion in the cessation is the idea of 'apavagga' (liberation) in the formless existence or world, etc. The wrong view of the path is however stated to be the classical extremes of worldly enjoyment and penance. In the 11th way he mentions the philosophical terms in the following phrases: "Like the pakati (prakriti in Sanskrit) of the proponents of the pakati... Like the dvi-anuka, etc. of the proponents of the samavāya .." These terms are used appropriately in the association and dissociation of the terms of the four truths.

Thus there are three types of voidness. One of this: "Nirodha

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is void (or devoid) of the remaining three (truths), or of the phala (result or effect). For, in the arising of the cause there is the absence of suffering." It is likely to look strange that the cause of suffering itself is not taken to be suffering. Similarly, there is the absence of nirodha in the path. There is no association of latent effect with the patent cause like the pakati of the pakati-vādins. However strange it may look, it appears to be logically not untenable. In Buddhistic psychology, mental moments do not overlap with each other. The continuous flow of discrete or disconnected mental moments runs along from the first moment of our life, throughout our life-span, to the last moment of our life. The Master also seems to have supported such a view in numerous suttas, such as the Potthapada Sutta in the Dīgha, the Dīgha-nikha Sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, etc.

Likewise there is the dissociation of the latent cause with the patent effect. The effect is void or devoid of the cause. Hence by the rule of 'asamavāya' (dissociation), there is no association between the suffering and the cause, and between the nirodha and the path. For, the effect is not associated with the cause like the dvi-anuka (two atoms combined, or duads) of the samavāya-vādins. In such instances Buddhaghosa has emphatically presented the Buddhistic viewpoint even at the risk of an allegation of dogmatism. In other words, the suffering does not co-exist with the cause at the very same moment, while the suffering lasts even for a moment. Similarly, at the moment of the path there cannot exist the moment of nirodha side by side. It is in keeping with the Master's way of explaining the twelve links of the dependent origination. And the Abhidhammic method of applying the twenty-four factors or conditions of Paṭṭhāna proceeds along the same line.

Standard of Evaluation

We may meditate or think over some subtle object or subject for a short or long duration of time. With a certain degree of achievement, we shall like to find out the position we are in with reference to some goal we are after. Then the question will arise as to how our progress towards the goal should be evaluated. This evaluation is possible, only if we set a standard for

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ourselves. The standard will have to be kept constant during the entire length of time we spend in the pursuit. When we begin to search for a suitable standard, the goal itself may come under our review and scrutiny. The early reminiscences of the Master show that the Shākya Prince Siddhārtha, as well as the Bodhisattva, underwent the severe test of self-examination and re-adaptation to changing circumstances again and again, before he thought of himself as perfectly enlightened, the Buddha.

Such a question was once put to the Buddha by the youthful king of the Magadha country. It was of course on the benefit of the renunciated life; in other words, the benefit was tantamount to the standard. The full discourse is recorded in the Sāmañña-Phala Sutta, the 2nd sutta of the *Dīgha-nikāya*. The Buddha explained to the king that it was patently realisable in this very life. The Master demonstrated, so to say, the benefits, one by one, with elucidatory similes, from those of the initial virtue to those of the greater ones. Then he began speaking about the benefits of the four form trances, through the various supernormal powers and the two knowledges, ending with the third or ultimate knowledge of the four noble truths. Thus it appears that the principal standard set up by the Master is the latter.

Since the fourth truth is the eightfold path, the seventh and eighth components of which are 'Sammā Sati' and 'Sammā Samādhi', we have herein our main requirements. For 'Sammā Sati' consists of the four observations, and 'Sammā Samādhi' similarly consists of the four form trances. As these observations and trances are fully explained in the Sutta and Abhidhamma, it is not very difficult to understand their main requisites for the purpose of setting up at least a tentative or workable standard of our own.

Trance versus Insight

The third truth is 'nirodha' or cessation. It is meditatively the ninth stage of the gradual trances, known as the 'Saññā-vedayita Nirodha Samā-patti', or the cessation of perception-cum-consciousness and feeling. Buddhaghosa in the commentary on the Sacca Vibhaṅga has however given more than twenty-five terms equivalent to this truth, Nirodha, or Nibbāna.

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This is because the cessation of suffering is realised through one's own insight as well. But this insight is said to be gained only after the attainment of a trance. The Master has not however stipulated this condition explicitly; but the implication of this stipulation can be construed out of his precept found in the nine-itemed Nipāta of the *Anguttara-nikāya*.

It is the Jhāna Sutta. Herein the Master says: "I speak, O Monks, of the eradication of āsavas through the support of the first trance as well." Similarly, he goes on speaking of the second, third, and fourth trances. In the same way he speaks consecutively of the four formless trances and the ultimate trances, the cessation of consciousness and feeling. The commentary on this sutta rightly says that the phrase, the eradication of āsavas, means arhathood. Therefore we have to derive the conclusion that the attainment of a trance is imperative for the achievement of a knowledge of liberation in Buddhism. Mere knowledge in the form of insight is not recognised as equivalent to aññā, or declaration of arhatship. This may dishearten some of us who might have held knowledge to be much superior to meditation.

The standard of evaluation, at least for reference, should be adapted to our modern circumstances from the tenets derivable from the four noble truths. These tenets would indicate moral integrity, meditative exercises for the advancement of pure knowledge, and the cultivation of mental powers capable of penetrating the fundamental truth through meditative insight. The goal is difficult to visualize before hand; it may and probably will change as we go forward; we should guard ourselves against its falling into lower and lower strata. As a simple rule, we may adopt the starting-point of the Shakya Prince in the long search for truth expressed in a short sentence as "kim kusala gaveṣi", or 'what is good? a seeker after it.' It is to be borne in mind that the word 'kusala' is used in a very wide sense, sphere, and field extending to the formless trances.

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XIII

A Panoramic View

Study with Meditation

STUDY PRECEDES meditation; but meditation may or may not follow study. Study and meditation may however keep company. It is seldom that meditation survives study. Study never ends, neither does meditation. Even if the former comes to an end, the latter may or may not singly come in. For study entails a concentration of thought and off and on even an absorbing interest in the subject matter under study; the interest moves on for a while; it may then turn into a flow of meditation. During a short period of time, we may expect something extraordinary.

When this happens we should let things take their own course. Our study will stop at that moment and should remain so suspended as long as our mood allows. For, the purpose of studying works on meditation is to organise it, rather than merely understand its never-ending complications. The meditative mood obtaining off and on in the interval is much more important than the knowledge obtained through study. Even a little experience in the meditative mood will help one to penetrate complicated matters more easily than a long and laborious study to unravel them.

Canonical Instances

Sāriputta, the famous disciple of the Buddha, obtained a first

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and direct experience of arhatship, while he was fanning the Master, standing behind him. He was then listening to the Master's discourse with a certain homeless wanderer. According to the commentary, Sāriputta was his maternal uncle. This wanderer's name was, after his vow, Dīgha-nakha (one with longfinger-nails). The event occurred, when the Master was staying in Sūkarakhata (in a swine-dug-out) cave[1] on the Vulture Peak of Rājagaha, the ancient capital of Magadha. In those days the study of scriptures consisted of learning, or listening to, a discourse or a precept and then reciting it by oneself. The account is given in the Dīgha-nakha Sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the 24th one of its second part.

Another instance of such an insight was that of a monk named Yamaka. He held the erroneous view that a Tathāgata or an arhat is broken off and annihilated after bodily death, and does not exist after death. The case was reported to Sāriputta, who was then staying in Sāvatthi, the ancient capital of Kosala. Sāriputta called the monk before him. By putting successive questions and getting negative answers from the monk, Sāriputta concluded the dialogue with one last question. He asked the monk: "When a Tathāgata is not available really and truly while still living in the present, is it proper for you to make that expression, such as a Tathāgata is broken off and annihilated after bodily death and does not exist after death?" Thereupon the monk gave a categorical answer: "Having heard this preaching of the Reverend Sāriputta, however, my mind is liberated of āsavas." This is a way of declaring one's arhatship. The account is found in the Yamaka Sutta of the Khandha-samyutta of the Khandha Vagga in the *Samyutta-nikāya*.

In the same Khandha-samyutta under the Khemaka Sutta, we have an instance of similar insights gained then and there by a monk named Khemaka and sixty other interlocutors. It is said that the monks were staying in the Ghositārāma Monastery in Kosāmbi, while Khemaka was suffering from severe illness in the Badarikārāma. The monks sent one among them, named Dāsaka, to enquire of the sick monk. It was also customary to send such a messenger to a dying monk for the purpose of receiving a declaration of his achievement, doubt, or penitence, if he had to make any. The sick monk disclosed his position of

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suspense to the messenger. He knew that he did not see anything like the self or of the self in the five heaps of mind-cum-matter elements, but still he was not liberated. He acknowledged that he obtained the feeling of 'Asmi', or the identification of 'I am' in the five heaps. Thereupon a series of questions and answers ensued between him and the sixty monks on the problem. Khemaka himself suggested the remedy. Then and there the sixty monks' minds were liberated of āsavas and also that of Khemaka was liberated thereof.

There are numerous instances of supramundane insights of different categories obtained by listeners to the Master's preaching during the discourse, with their due acknowledgements and declarations towards the end. In the commentatorial literature also, such instances are not rare. Since the subject belongs to the sphere of Nibbāna, we propose to deal with it, as best as our resources permit in the last phase of our research. It should, however, be understood here that such an insight is not merely an intellectual grasp of the subject. It is a veritable visualization of the subject.

Meditation and Vision

Meditation opens up our mind to wider fields of vision. The Shākya Prince organized the first trance under the rose-apple tree. It widened later on to such an extent as to include the whole system of Buddhistic meditation. The difference between his meditation and ours should not be taken as unconceivably large. From the viewpoint of temporal duration, the trance of beings in form and formless planes exceeds that of the Prince by aeons and aeons. Even when he became wholly absorbed later on in successive trances, the duration was reportedly a matter of weeks, not months or years.

The quality of trance also may not much differ between his and ours, so far as meditative properties are concerned. For he has rarely spoken of such a differentiation between his trance and that of his disciples. So there is no reason for us to belittle our own meditation before that of the Master. It is not with any intention of showing irreverence to the Master, but it is to be fair to our own efforts in meditation. If we give any imaginatively superior weight to the meditation of the same category,

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we shall be degrading not only our poor selves but also our own meditation.

Whether we concentrate our mental energy on one point or on an extensive field, our meditation is sure to expand much more extensively than the original object. Whatever has been said above about the expansion of a counterpart sign may apply to any concentration in meditation. For, an our meditation begins to expand, so does our vision in unison.

Similarity

The similarity in trances and supernormal powers and knowledges has been described by the Master himself. It is recorded in the Jhāna-abhiññā Sutta of the Kassapa-samyutta in the *Samyutta-nikāya*. The Master was then staying in Sāvatthi. He said thus: "I, O Monks, organise and maintain the first trance...as long as I wish. Kassapa also, O Monks, organises and maintains the first trance...as long as he wishes." In this way the Master goes on to the second, third, and fourth trances and says that Kassapa also does the same. Then the Master describes the same similarity between his four formless trances and those of Kassapa. In the ninth trance also the same thing is repeated. Similarly the Master describes the precept of the supernormal powers and three knowledges and says that the same thing is done by Kassapa also.

Thus we can fairly conclude that meditation is not very different in its nature. Differences are there, but these are due to the object and support of meditation. The form trance is therefore different from the formless one, because the form is not transcended in the former and it is transcended in the latter. From the viewpoint of mental concentration, both the categories of trance are equal and similar. Each of them again is different from the other and so they will differ from one another in both types of trance. The ultimate ninth trance must however be similar to these by its very nature; for it is void or devoid of consciousness and feeling. Hence it will always be different from all other types of meditation and trance.

Buddha's Speciality

If there be no difference in the meditation of the Buddha

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and that of his adept disciples, the question about his special qualification will naturally arise. The answer has been provided by the Master himself. It is the discourse entitled the 'Sammā-sambuddha Sutta' in the Khandha-samyutta of the *Samyutta-nikāya*. The Master was then staying in Sāvatthi. He said: "Tathāgata, O Monks, is called Arahan...Sammā-sambuddha... because of his being liberated... The monk is also called... because of his being liberated... Then, O Monks, what is his speciality, superiority, and difference from that monk?" The import of the question is plain. The Master had taught all his contrivances, types of meditation, and kinds of insight to his disciples. He had left nothing secret and reserved nothing.

Naturally the Master could not have differentiated the achievements of his adept disciples from his own. Had he done so, the second gem or jewel[2] and the taking of refuge to it would have meant little. So the Master answered his own question as follows: "Tathāgatha, O Monks, is the producer of the unproduced path, the acquainter of the unacquainted path, the expounder of the unexpounded path, the expert, well-versed, and perfect knower of the path. The followers of the path are, O Monks, the disciples who follow me. This is verily, O Monks, the speciality, superiority, and difference of Tathāgata, Arahat, Sammā-sambuddha from the monk liberated through paññā (knowledge)." This is a faultless demarcation between the Teacher and the taught.

Rapid Survey

The Buddhistic Canon is a vast literature. What we have done so far covers only a small section of relative topics from that store. The first phase of this research accordingly has mainly dealt with the organisation of the form trance together with its allied subjects. The commentary forms a still vaster literature, difficult to study independently of the text on which it comments. Were it possible to read it as an independent work, as the *Visuddhi-magga*, the commentary would have been still more useful. Its helpfulness would not have suffered in the least, if it had adopted the sutta style of writing, or adapted its style in such a manner as to remove the need of constant reference to each and every word in the text.

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We have adopted a middle way in this respect and connection for making the research an authenticated independent work. As such, the initial features of this second phase of the research were necessary. A rapid survey of the work already accomplished is often imperative to advance towards the next stage; otherwise the latter will have to revert to the former in many places. With the initial features, this phase will also assume an authenticated independent work as the first phase has done.

As in other fields of learning and practice, the subject of meditation also requires a rapid survey over its entire field now and then. This mental survey may even discover a fresh line of approach towards our goal and disclose something new to be added to our usual method of procedure. We have not only to adopt the ancient method, but also to adapt it to our modern conditions. Only an occasional rapid survey over the entire field of meditation and meditative insight will be of much help in the matter.

NOTES

[1]Sūkarakheta cave—There is an interesting story about this cave dug out by a swine (Sukara). The commentary on this (24th) sutta related the incident thus: "It is said that in the time of Kassapa-Buddha that cave was buried deep down into the earth due to the rising ground during the period of a Buddha's rule. One day a certain swine dug out earth near the edge of the covering of this (cave). When it rained and earth was washed away, the edge of the covering was disclosed. A certain forest-dweller saw this (and said to himself): 'This cave must have been used before by the disciplined (monks). I shall repair this.' Having made this a fine-looking cave-monastery, the man dedicated it for the use of the Master. The (Lena) cave was deep and one had to descend and then to climb." This incident should better our attitude towards the poor creature, which is unreasonably incriminated in some communities because of the pork-soup eaten at the last meal of the Master.

[2]Gem or jewel—'Ratna' in Pāli and 'Ratana' in Sanskrit. Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, or respectively the Master, his teachings, and order, are collectively known as the Three Gems or Jewels (Tiratānani or Ratanatatya in Pāli and Triratna or Ratnatraya in Sanskrit). The second jewel is thus the Dhamma taught by the Master. The conversion to Buddhism is declared by the three refuges uttered three times

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in Pāli, meaning 'I take the Refuge in Buddha...' Dhamma', and 'I take the Refuge of Sangha.' This series of the Refuges is repeated thrice. The Master himself has praised these three gems. The discovery of the second refuge was not due to chance, but the result of his deep thinking, corroborated by his friendly Sahampati Brahmā.

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XIV

Formless Trance—Main Thesis—Common Features

Devoid of Matter

THE TRANCE of the formless sphere is devoid of any conception of matter. The absence of such a conception helps to check any perception of material objects arising in the mind. Any stimulus coming from outside will not receive a corresponding response from within, so that the usual process of cognition will not ensue. The energy of such a stimulus will be absorbed in the trance. The material objects appear to be as such, only if the stimulus could raise the full course of mental cognition. For an incoming stimulus alone cannot effect a perception of its source without the mind adverting to it. And there is no mental adverting to outside objects in a formless trance.

In meditation we are chiefly concerned with our perception and conception, and not with the metaphysical import of physical objects lying outside and surrounding us. The mind tuned to such a trance will not be aware of any material object, even if the eyes be open and the ears unplugged or open. When we desire an object, we accept its existence. But, if the desire be removed from it, the need for accepting its existence may be suspended for the time being. Metaphysical questions become disturbing, when we are at leisure to attend to them. When we

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have no such leisure while we are engaged in and attending to a trance, no such questions come in to disturb the mind.

The conception of matter is harder to discard in a trance-organisation than its perception. For the former is formed from within, whereas the latter comes in from without. The contrivance of four observations, especially that of respirations and feelings, checks such conceptual ramblings effectively. For these observations engage the mind so constantly in them, that the mind gets no opportunity to indulge in the luxuries of metaphysical thoughts. Should any one of the observations bore one, it can be changed for the next to remove the boredom.

No Material Body

The physical body is conceived as made of matter. It appears to be heavy, hard, and solid. It makes us feel that we are where the body is. We feel that with the movement of the body, we move, and with the bodily actions, we act. Such an identification of ourself with the body generates a firm conviction in us that we are inseparable from the body. The body is not only made of matter and material derivatives, but also of immaterial elements. Were it not also made of the latter, no trance would have been possible. The material body lasts in meditation, as long as its conception holds it firm.

Meditation loosens such a conviction and evaporates such a conception. In other words, we ignore the material body and its conception also passes off. Then the immaterial body becomes prominent with the mental concomitant appropriate to the mental state obtaining in a particular stage of meditation. In our ordinary experience the body and the mind seem to follow each other. But in meditation it is the body that follows the mind.

The observation on the body firstly generates the memory on the support of the body. Then it purifies the memory by presenting the body as made up of disagreeable parts and elements. This memory is trained in the line of the Master's precept: "Or his (the practiser's) memory is maintained in alertness on—'atthi kāyo ti'—that the body is." Although not clearly mentioned in the text, the precept can be followed up only if one constantly feels the body. The feeling of the body is not material, but it is

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a concomitant of the bodily consciousness, and hence it is immaterial.

In meditation one gradually transcends the material body. One does so quickly in a form trance. In observation the initial concept of the material body slowly loses its hold and the concept of the immaterial body replaces the former one. It should be borne in mind that a meditative exercise is not generally concerned with the materiality or the immateriality of one's own body or that of others. The result is the feeling of the meditative or immaterial body. Even in the observation of the disagreeable parts and elements of the body, such sentiments are kept up with great efforts for the relative purpose, so far as the destructible properties of matter are concerned. It is so in the contemplation of the corpse as well. When we begin to contemplate on a dead body, the latter will gradually assume an immaterial form. Otherwise we could not have organised a first form trance on each of the ten putrefied states of the corpse. Similarly, it would not have been possible to organise a form trance on each of the thirty-two ingredients of the body.

In the organisation of a formless trance, we shall transcend the body both material and immaterial. For the formless trance is organised, in the Buddha's meditative system, to transcend the form trance, in which the body is felt as a mere form or as an immaterial one. The material conception of the body is already left off in the form trance. The material body when grasped is one of the items of the first noble truth of suffering. In the 'kāma dhātu', desire is rampant, due to which the material conception is held firm. This is only from a viewpoint of meditation, and not from that of dogmatism or metaphysics. In short, the formless trance does away with the material and immaterial body during the organisation and maintenance of the trance.

Disappearance of Forms

When our eyes are open and not closed, material objects appear before us. If we close our eyes, we see nothing but darkness before them. But after a time some forms or others begin to come in and go out of sight endlessly. These forms are said to be originating and forming from the 'citta' (mind) and

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'cetasika' (concomitants of the mind). This is our common experience. In dreams, we see forms changing unpredictably. It is only in a dreamless sleep that we might have experienced, were we conscious, the formless state.

But such a mental state is known as the 'bhavanga citta' or the mental flow running throughout the life-span. As such it is incapable of appearing through any sense-door in the usual mental process of cognition. Hence we cannot perceive a formless view in any one of our mental states ordinarily. It is only in a formless trance that one can experience a mental state of formlessness. The state is not only the absence of forms, but it is also devoid of other sensible objects besides the visible ones.

The disappearance of forms means the absence of visible objects in any shape or form both inner and outer. Similarly, other sensible objects are also absent in the formless state of the mind. The disappearance of forms is brought about through the instrumentality of an active mind, while one organises the formless trance. It is not the result of any casual and passive working of the mind. It is therefore plain that such a unique state of the mind will require an intensive mental effort in its organisation and maintenance. One should not however think that the mental state of such blankness is beyond one's reach. There were many monks in the Buddha's time who had practised and mastered the process of these trances. Some of them were even so expert as to organise the trances very quickly and terminate these in the cessation of consciousness and feeling.

Neutral Poise

Upekkhā, or neutral poise, is a keynote of these trances. Such a poise is said to be fully acquired in the fourth form trance and thence to be obtaining throughout these formless trances. If one fails to keep up this poise, one may descend either to a form plane or to a material one. Hence the poise actually means the maintaining of non-attachment to any pleasurable feeling likely to arise in the meditative absorption. Accordingly this neutral balance between pleasure and pain becomes a guideline in organising and recognizing a formless trance. For a temporary absence alone of forms is not taken by itself for such a trance.

It has been already said above that such a neutral poise is

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neither the absence of feeling, nor a state merely in between pleasure and pain, nor any negative aspect of feeling. This poise is an actively organised frame of mind predominantly felt after discarding pleasurable and painful feelings. We can hardly find an analogy of such a mental frame in our ordinary life in the material world. For a formless trance or contemplation is a product of a highly purified activity of mind.

Paucity of Details

We expect more details of a trance in the commentary than those in the text. But contrary to our expectations, we find far fewer details in the former than in the latter. Even in the *Visuddhi-magga* Buddhaghosa devoted only twelve pages to these four "Āruppā" or formless trances, wheraes he has used seventy-two pages for "Anussati" or remembrance. The stereotyped style of presentation has virtually made only four pages, out of these twelve pages, of any use to us. The commentatorial details of organising this trance are so poor and gross as to make them of little value for use as a practical guide.

Asvaghosa treats of this subject briefly only in six stanzas; from the 61st to the 63rd and from the 85th to the 87th of the 12th canto in his work, the *Buddha-Carita*. The method is too cryptic to be helpful in a practical way. It is however not dissimilar to what we find in the Pāli text and commentary. The state of the fourth formless trance is ingeniously but philosophically given in the last or 87th stanza.

Vasubandhu has also given only a brief treatment of this trance in the 8th chapter of his work, the *Abhidharma-kośa*. Although this chapter mainly treats of dhyāna or meditation, his brief kārikā style is not helpful for practical purposes. It is interesting to learn that there was a certain sect of Buddhism which held a somewhat different view on the nature of this trance. This sect derived the meaning of 'a little rūpa' from 'ārupya' and held that there was some form in this trance. But he contradicts such a view on the ground that the form is generated out of the mind.

Thus the paucity of details on this sort of trance in non-canonical works also necessitates research into the canonical text itself. The only difficulty in the text is the stereotyped form

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of repetition, wherever these four trances are described or related. There are however a few discourses wherein we find a break-up of the usual consecutive flow of these four items, which may help us to form our own conclusion as regards the method of organising these higher trances.

Real Plane of Existence

These four formless trances are not merely psychological phenomena. According to Buddhism they are the real plane of existence. We cannot locate such a plane in our known cosmic world, nor imagine it in any material unknown world. But it would not be illogical to derive such a plane from the fact that the psychological phenomenon of such a trance exists. Even if we take the theory of rebirth for a tentative dogma and hold a non-committal view as regards the future birth of a practiser of these trances in such a plane, we can well imagine that the practiser must be finding himself in a plane appropriate to his meditative achievement at least during his trance.

The phenomena of dreams are our common experience, but we do not accept any real dream plane, or the existence of a dreamland. This is because dreams are so unstable, unworkable and unreal in our world. We do not organise our dreams. Otherwise we would not find ourselves under adverse circumstances in our own dreams. On the other hand, we actively organise our trance. It is thus our own creation. It is seemingly more stable, workable and real than our wakeful complex material world. Hence we can logically conclude that the practiser of the formless trance must realise at least where he is. If he does so, he is in a real plane of formless existence.

Regions of Brahmaloka

Mythologically Brahmaloka is the highest heaven. It is brilliant, blissful, and perfectly calm. The name itself is dazzling to any oriental conception of heaven free from all sorts of disturbances. It does not consist of only one region, but there are several regions of Brahmaloka. According to Buddhistic scriptures, there are sixteen regions of Brahmaloka in the form category. In the formless category there are four regions of Brahmaloka appropriate to the nature of each of the four

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trances. If we measure the bliss of perfect calmness according to the height of the regions, the formless region must be more blissful than form regions of Brahmaloka.

Besides the four form trances already dealt with in the first phase of this research, there are the methods of organising four immeasurable meditations leading the practiser to gain Brahmaloka. The latter method partly belongs to the field of supernormal powers as well. Hence it was not included in the first phase. Since the literature on the subject is vast and the method is different from that of organising either form or formless trances, it was reserved for a later phase.

As a matter of fact, the method of organising the form trance is not difficult to attain. If it is achieved to a certain degree of satisfaction, the organisation of formless trances should not be beyond the reach of a resolute meditationist. The oft-repeated graduation of form and formless trances convinces us of the fact that the latter was also easily achieved, in the life-time of the Master, by many of his disciples. Actually we have such records in a number of discourses.

In the Moggallāna Samyutta of the Salāyatana Vagga of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, we have nine suttas, in which the principal disciple, Moggallāna, tells the members of the Order of his achievement of all the gradual trances through the timely help and encouragement of the Master. Doubtless there occurred some mental impediment at each stage of development, and mere encouragement and warning from the Master were enough to remove the impediment.

We have given above some common features of the formless trance. These features will guide the reader to go deeper into what follows concerning these trances and the method of organising them. The usefulness of these devices will also be apparent not only in the still higher, but in the lower trances as well. For the Master's specific device runs through almost all the practices he taught.

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XV

Methods of Organisation

Preliminaries

THE MASTER'S system of meditation is quite different from other systems. He has often declared that he teaches what he has himself fully practised, investigated, and discerned. We have ample and sufficient reasons to believe such an assertion from him. Firstly, there are the minute details of preliminaries to the organisation of all types of meditative and intuitive observation, contemplation, absorption, and trance, which are given in a number of discourses by the Master. They show that such full and rich particulars as these could have stemmed only from his own direct experience. Secondly, there is the mental disposition of unique aloofness, the constantly conscious alertness of the mind, and the discernment of favourable and unfavourable elements and factors, which are almost similar throughout his system of meditation.

Meditation, from his point of view, is never for enjoyment, nor for amusement as a magical display of supernormal powers, nor for an imaginatively long sojourn in some ideally blissful heaven or divine abode. It is solely for a unique poise of selfless existence while alive, and of inexpressible non-existence after the cessation of such a physical life. We have, moreover, enough reason to believe that he kept up this poise throughout his enlightened life-span. As otherwise he would and could not

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have declared, at his death-bed, to Subhadda, the Wanderer, that he had seen none, during the fifty-one years of his homeless life, who discerned even a particle of logical doctrine outside his order of monks and disciples. He said, "Subhadda! If a monk properly meditates here, the world will not be empty of arhats, the liberated ones." This account is recorded in the section dealing with the ordination of a wanderer named Subhadda towards the end of the Maha-pari-nibbāna Sutta, the 16th discourse of the *Dīgha-nikāya.*

Not only the uniformity of his mental disposition, but also that of his selection of the physical environments is most striking. He has always advised his disciples to select a lonely place for meditation. One is to sit down there, with the body erect and the memory or consciousness alert before oneself. The sitting posture is, however, not stipulated and therefrom we can conclude that the posture may be anyone that gives one ease and stability. It is not clear why the body should be kept erect, specially when such a bodily position is difficult to maintain for long. Perchance the Pāli phrase describing this position is not different from the position mentioned in the 46th sūtra of the 2nd part of the *Yoga-sūtra.* The relative sūtra means that the sitting posture is one giving stable ease. The Pāli phrase literally means that the body should be kept 'uju', 'riju' in Sanskrit, or straight.

The Eyes

The eyes are important in the form trance. They should also be kept at ease. So kept they will normally be open, and not closed. But in the organisation of a formless trance we might justly think that closed eyes would be more helpful than open ones. The text does not seem to deviate from its usual stipulation regarding the body and the memory. It is common knowledge that some effort is necessary to close our eyes. Such a physical effort may hinder the smooth progress of our mind towards its higher target.

The natural position of the eyes in any deep and serious thinking of our everyday life is half-closed and half-open. And the Master has always warned the disciples against torpor and sleepiness. Closed eyes might induce bodily as well as mental

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idleness. Hence the eyes should not be invariably forced open or closed. If it help to close off the incoming visual stimuli for a time, we may lightly close our eyes. Initially lightly closed would be seemingly more helpful to grasp the concept of formlessness than eyes open to incoming stimuli of visual objects. But there is no mention of closing of eyes during meditation in the text.

The Ears

The text mentions a passage telling us that the 'sadda', or sound, is a thorn in a first form trance. The passage is often mentioned in the commentary. But in practice mere sound is not an impediment to any meditation. If it were so, the first trance could not have been organised even in those remote times. For the sound of nature, birds, and beasts was as plentiful then as it is now. The sound that is often disturbing is oral, human, and significant. In spite of such disturbances, the plugging of ears is nowhere suggested during meditation. So far as the formless trance is concerned, sound is nowhere spoken of as an impediment.

It is strange that sound is not expressly made a vehicle of attaining a trance in the Master's system, whereas visual objects serve as a support for several types of meditation. Similarly, smell and taste do not appear as a device either in the system. Although touch or tactile sensation is akin to feeling, the former is ignored, while the latter plays the most important role in almost all principal types of meditation.

Devices of Hathayoga

The internal taste is made an important device in Haṭhayoga to attain a mindless state of samādhi termed 'manonmani'. It is through the device of 'khecari', one of the principal mudrās. This mudrā is fully dealt with in the twenty-three stanzas from the 32nd to the 54th stanza of the 3rd part of the *Haṭha-yoga-Pradīpikā*, an old work on the system of Haṭhayoga written by Svātmārāma, a renowned follower of the Nātha sect. This device utilizes the internally upturned and straightened tongue to taste the inner salivary juice in order to concentrate the mind through that constant taste. The operation of training the

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tongue for the purpose takes time. The physical support is strong enough to draw and absorb the mind into a state of samādhi probably longer than that obtained by means of mental efforts alone. Nevertheless it will be clear to the reader's mind that such a device cannot find acceptance in the Master's system.

Another well-known device is the internal sound. Concentration on such a constant sound is said to lead one to a similar state of 'unmani', or mindlessness. It is generally and briefly spoken of as 'nāda', or sound. A few appliances are also used to close the ears to external sounds, and then attention is directed to the inner sound through the right ear. The full detail is given in forty stanzas from the 67th to the 106th stanza of the 4th or last part of the above-mentioned work. The practice is comparatively easy and hence popular. But the principle of getting oneself totally absorbed in sound is obviously incompatible with the meditative principle of the Master.

The system of Haṭhayoga is mainly based upon physico-psychic devices. Leaving aside its doctrinal incompatibilities, the system itself appears to be harmless. But the inclusion of three notorious mudrās in its system has largely contributed to its unacceptability in sober and serious systems of meditation and philosophy. They are treated of from the 83rd to the 103rd stanza of the 3rd part of the same work.

Sambhavi Mudra

One of the important mudrās in the Haṭhayoga system is the Śāmbhavi. It is also significant for our purpose. It is described in the eight stanzas from the 35th to the 42nd stanza of the 4th part of the above-mentioned work. It concerns itself with the position of the physical and mental eyes in connection with the target to be aimed at.

The method of organising this mudrā is simple but significant. The target is mentally fixed at one of the inner subtle psychic centres. It is termed 'antar-lakṣya' or inner target. And the physical eyes are kept outside technically called 'bahir-dṛiṣṭi' or outer sight. Such a position of the eyes will mean that they are open.

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In such a practice it is said in the relevant verse that the eyelids stop opening and closing. With the ball and pupil of the eyes remaining fixed and motionless, the practiser does not see anything, though he appears to look outside. For the mind does not advert to any sensible objects. The difference between the two mudrās, Śāmbhavi and Khecari, is strangely stated to be one of situation. The eyes are moved outside in the former, while they are turned up and centred on the spot between the two eyebrows in the latter. The inner target of the first is the heart-centre, whereas that of the second is the inner centre of the above spot.

Laya or Absorption

The aim and purpose of Haṭhayoga is expressly stated to be 'laya' or immersion and absorption into a blissful void. There might have been many more methods of organising a device to such an absorption than what we find at present, as is evident from the 66th stanza of the 4th part of the above work. In this stanza the author of the work says that he regards the practice of 'nāda' or sound as the foremost among the devices of absorption.

The author of the work named Svātmārāma gives in five stanzas from the 5th to the 9th stanza of the first part, the names of thirty-four mahā-siddhas beginning with the very first propounder of the Haṭha and founder of the Nātha sect by the name of Ādinātha. The list of names includes those of Matsyendra, Śāvara, Bhairava, . . . Gorakṣa or Gorakha, Virūpākṣa, . . . Kapāli, Kāpālika, etc. One of the strange names is Allama. The list is evidently not complete; accordingly the the commentator, Brahmānanda, mentions Tārānātha as well.

The devices found in the Buddha's system of meditation are fundamentally different from those of the Haṭha system. As already mentioned elsewhere the Haṭha type of prāṇāyāma or retention of breath is not the same as ānāpāna in the former system. None of the Haṭha mudrās is advocated in the Buddhistic text and commentary. The nāda, so popular in the Haṭha and other systems, is never practised in Buddhism, excepting in a rare practice of divine ear.[1] Even the 'laya' kind of absorption or trance, so highly spoken of and exclusively

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depended upon in Haṭha yoga, falls very short of the standard set up and recognised for a supramundane purpose by the Master.

Consequently, a Haṭhayogin, or a follower of the Haṭha system of meditation, will find it hard to digest the rules and principles of the Buddhistic system of meditation. Hence the former may be taken as a clear contrast to the latter. It appears that the former could not borrow anything of value, under these conditions, from the latter. Otherwise the first would have assimilated at least a few devices of the formless trance of the second into the body of diversified absorptions by the first.

On the other hand, there is nothing of Haṭha practices in the Buddha's system. It appears that everything smacking of the Haṭha disappeared in his later system with the abandonment of his six years' austerities on the eve of his perfect enlightenment. The yogic world would have much benefited if the Master had given some attention to these practices, provided they were extant in some way or other in those remote times.

General Formulas

The text concerning the organisation of the formless trances is laconic, cryptic, and uncomfortably stereotyped. There must have existed a separate and specific device for each of these trances at least as we find for the form trances. The Master could not have expected his disciples to attain the formless trance merely by telling them to transcend the form perception totally. This is specially so when even a monk of Moggallāna's calibre and capacity needed the Master's encouragement and guidance at each time of transcending the lower stage and attaining the higher one both in the form and formless trances. The account is given in the nine suttas of the Moggallāna Samyutta already mentioned above.

The account is given thus in the *Samyutta-nikāya*. The Reverend Moggallāna was at one time staying in the Jetavana Monastery of Anātha-piṇḍika in Sāvatthi. There he addressed the congregation of monks: "Friends! here it thus occurred to me, when I had resorted to a lonely place and been engaged in meditation . . . The first Jhāna, the first Jhāna is talked about. But which one is indeed the first Jhāna?" Then he related

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to them how he organised the first Jhāna. The formula was the same as found elsewhere.

Then he tells them that, while he meditated in that way, perception and thoughts associated with desire used to frequent his mind. At such a critical moment the Master approached him bodily through supernormal power and addressed him thus: "Moggallāna! Moggallāna! Don't be negligent of the first Jhāna, O Brāhmaṇa! Gather the mind properly in the first Jhāna; make the mind concentrated in the first Jhāna; hold the mind firmly in the first Jhāna."

Such a supernormal visit of the Master is often mentioned in the canon and commentary. We shall fully deal with the particulars of such extraordinary phenomena in the latter phase of our research. We shall have to reserve our discussion of the subject until then. The supernatural element in the text does not however intervene in our narrative. For the purpose is fulfilled, if the monk was warned, encourged, or helped at each stage by the Master. The event might have happened naturally, magically, or suggestively.

To resume the narrative, the monk concluded his discourse with the final statement that he was thereafter quite easily organising and maintaining the first trance. In the successive suttas, Moggallāna similarly described his attainment of all the rest of the Jhānas and the four formless trances and the ultimate liberation. At each stage of critical moments, he was helped by the Master.

The above account is given in connection with the stabilizing of the organised trance. It does not show, however, the method of organising a trance itself in its initial stage. There are many instances in the suttas, when the Master himself gave a suitable kammaṭṭhāna, or object of meditation, to his disciple. The disciple is invariably reported to have accomplished his assignment to the entire satisfaction of himself and also often of the Master as well. Hence the general formulas, as found in the extant text, of the formless trances are not what we would have expected from the Master who had reportedly kept back nothing.

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Main Principles

Under the circumstances mentioned above we have to depend on the main principles to be gathered from the relative suttas for the organisation of the formless trances. The commentaries and even the comparatively short description of the relative portion in the *Visuddhi-magga* are not of much practical value and help. One of the main principles unmistakably detectable in the devices is the transcending of the lower stage, state, factors, or support of a trance. The Bodhisatto attained the highest stage of the nibbānic trance through the instrumentality of transcending each stage of gradual trances successively. There are several terms and phrases expressed in words other than transcendence, but their purport is chiefly seen to be the latter.

Another principle is the withholding of thinking about the object, subject, or concept that is to be transcended. It is technically termed 'a-manasi-kāra' meaning non-thinking; but it is practically the device of the withholding of thinking about the object or support of meditation By the way, it appears to be the most favourite of the devices for transcendence often resorted to by the Master himself. In other words, it amounts to not adverting to what we are going to make disappear from our mental field.

The third principle is the seeking of an outlet or an exit from the present state to something higher, superior, or calmer. This is called 'nissarana' or exit. The Bodhisatto always sought to find an exit from each of his organised states of meditation. It was at first in expectation of a subtler state of psychic experience, and afterwards for the achievement of a natural poise of perfect liberation. We are told that such a poise is an exit from all kinds of dogmas and doctrines concerning the metaphysical entities and philosophical probabilities.

The fourth principle is the non-absorption of oneself into any state of trance. If one were to ignore this principle, none could have even crossed over the different planes of existence and realised the perfect poise, the poise of complete liberation, which is claimed to have been attained by so many monks of the Buddhistic Order. Even if we leave aside the idea of libera-

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tion as something monastic or classical, the unique poise of mind in the cessation of consciousness and feeling would never have been experienced in the Master's time and afterwards, without such a principle being strictly adhered to.

There are other principles, major or minor, according to our own temperament and manner of judgement. Buddhaghosa has laid particular emphasis on the principle of discrimination between the merit of a higher state and the demerit of a lower state of trance. But the emphasis is seemingly inopportune; for the merit of a state not yet obtained can be only imaginatively conceived and not realised for any practical purpose. The demerit of a state currently obtaining cannot be discerned enough to dislike and transcend the state. Nevertheless the device is found in the text and can serve as a minor principle.

Transcendence

We have already learnt in the first phase of this research, that it is necessary to transcend the material plane in order to organise and attain the form plane. That was the most difficult impediment. When obtained, the form trance was not very hard to be raised from the first stage to the fourth or last stage of the purification of non-attachment and memory. The factors of vitakka, vicāra, joy, and pleasure were eliminated one by one in the successive stages by appropriate means. There were left only the two factors of 'upekkhā', or non-attachment, and 'ekaggatā' or concentration of thought.

These two factors run throughout the four formless trances. Hence the latter is also included in the fourth trance of the form category. But we have to transcend the latter in its form aspect totally in order to organise and obtain the former. The presence of any semblance of form, colour, or shape would destroy the aspect of formlessness in a trance of this category. There must be also an absence of properties belonging to other sensible objects in our perception and conception, while we are staying in such a trance.

Because of the absence of such limitations, this type of trance is also known as illimitables or without limits. The technical term is 'Ānañca-āyatana' in Pāli and 'Ānantya-āyatana' in Sanskrit, meaning the support of limitless expanse. Any shape

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or form would limit the expanse to that extent. If there is no shape or form, the first formless support of trance will be without limits. Hence such a support, as well as a trance organised on it, is spoken of as 'Ākāsa-ānañca-āyatana' or the spatial limitless support or expanse.

Means and Ways

So the principle of transcendence helps us to devise our own ways and means of crossing over or rising above the lower plane of forms. The use of words such as lower and higher does not however connote a sense of inferiority and superiority, respectively, in the sphere of meditation and insight. One of us may organise the first form trances, the lowest in the scale of nine gradual trances, and obtain a glimpse of nibbānic calm and liberation through the post-trance review and insight. On the other hand, someone among the experts in meditation might be staying in the seventh and eighth stages of trance and still be groping in the dark for the real significance of the state of trance attained. Meditation and insight are expected to go side by side in Buddhism.

In order to obtain the formless field before the eyes, we have to remove the forms. But the forms cannot be removed at our will. So we shall be called upon to remove the mind from the forms. We are not entering into any philosophical question concerning mind and matter, and do not intend to posit or negate the one for or against the other. The forms are the resulting phenomena of different factors, one of which is the mind. If we can remove the mind effectively, the phenomenon of form may not occur at least for the time being.

The removal of the mind out of the field of mental vision should not be thought uncommon or exceptional. Unknowingly we are doing so in our everyday life. When our interest requires it, we can adjust our inner vision in a way to serve our special purpose. We are able to keep our target under view constantly, shutting off other things extraneous to the target, the centre of interest. It is not so easy to do it knowingly. The difficulty in the former arises from the need of our conscious effort to shut off part of the situation from the centre of interest.

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If the centre of interest is formlessness, the situation of sensible objects including shapes, colours, and forms can be similarly transcended. As we organise the form trance by separating the mere shapes and their patterns from the material objects, so may we organise the formless trance by withdrawing our recognition of the form pattern. The latter may gradually make the pattern disappear and a certain glimpse of formlessness appear. Such a glimpse of new vision in the mental field greatly helps us to organise a trance of this type through 'samatikkama' or transcendence.

Non-thinking

The principle of 'amanasi-kāra' or non-thinking is closely related to that of transcendence. It is through the non-thinking of the diversified forms in a pattern that we can transcend the plane of forms and attain that of formlessness. In the discourse of 'Cūla Suññatā', the 121st sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya* the Master has given us practical guidance in this device. The title of this discourse means 'a smaller sutta on voidness'. The voidness described herein is however relative and not absolute. It is taught as a contemplation not strictly as a trance, though the four formless trances are mentioned. The Master has named it 'Suññatā Vihāra' or contemplative recreation of voidness.

The device of non-thinking is based on a real situation, as explained in this sutta. It is so only at the initial stage, where we are taught to mark the situation of a monastery for an example. The monastery is void or empty of groups of beasts and treasures of gold and silver. The absence of these things is equivalent to the non-thinking of them. So any situation may be taken to grasp the idea of non-thinking. Viewed in such a light, non-thinking is not passive, nor forgetting, nor becoming unaware of something. It is actively being aware of absence. In such a real situation we are to learn how to withhold our thinking about the things absent therefrom and mark the situation as devoid of those things.

The later portions of the sutta show that the Master is teaching us how we think and "unthink" over the presence and absence of things in a situation. If we are going to take up the concept of a desert,we shall have to unthink all the intervening habita-

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tions and their inhabitants. It may appear to be an act of imagination to create a mental desert, but the text does not allow us to do so. In our imagination we think in order to create, say, a mental desert. We do not try to unthink human beings or their habitations for that purpose. For the Master says that he is talking of a real situation of the presence and the absence of things in that situation, and not merely of an imaginary one.

[The Pāli word repeatedly used in the discourse is the past participle "amanasi-karitvā', literally 'not in mind done', or 'having unthought'. But the context shows that we have to think ('manasi karoti') something while unthinking ('amanasi karitvā') other undesirable things. The word 'unthink' may be equivalent to 'ignore, overlook, pass over, omit, to pay no attention to' etc. At any rate, it should convey the meaning of our active avoidance of attention to those objects we want to transcend or think.

If we can think something actively, we may possibly unthink other things also actively. For example, if we unthink the men and their habitation and think, or take into our thinking, a desert, we organise the concept of a desert in meditation. The question of unthinking is certainly hard to solve, but by practice it may become easy.]

A Clue to Organisation

These four formless trances are generally, or rather invariably, given only after the four form trances in most of the relative suttas. We become therefore inclined to think that the order of form and formless trances must be natural and unconvertible. There are several suttas that describe this series of trances both in ascending and descending order, but not in an isolated manner. So we systematically find the order of nine gradual cessations or trances and regard it to be inviolable. But the above sutta deals with two steps of contemplative character previous to the organisation of the first formless trance. This is exceptional. Hence it is worthy of serious notice and study.

The extent of popularity and standard of this 'vihāra' or contemplation can be gauged by its name and practice. This meditation is also named as the Mahāpuruṣa Vihāra, or the meditative recreation of great and noble ones. It is also recorded that highly esteemed arhats including the Master himself used

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to organise and dwell in this Suññatā Vihāra very often and that for many years. There must be however some difference between this Vihāra of voidness and the ninth trance of the cessation of consciousness and feeling, inasmuch as the latter is to be organised and dwelt in continuously for a week, while the former seems to be indulged in as a meditative pastime by serious and liberated noble ones much advanced in years.

The above-mentioned sutta shows that the formless trance can be organised even immediately after the contemplation of a large expanse of the two-dimensional surface of the earth. The concept of such an expanse should have been seemingly imaginative or a much developed counterpart sign of an earth kasiṇa. But the Master does not say so. He says that such an expanse can be fruitfully conceived after the contemplation of 'arañña saññā' or the perception or conception of a desert. The desert is perceived or conceived as an extensive barren tract of land free of vegetation, habitation, and beings dead or living.

The concept of a vast expanse of land is an improvement over that of a desert. The surface of the earth is conceived at first as free from its geographical features and then as an extensive surface like that of a large bovine hide straightened by nails on the corners. Such a conception of flattened earth is not hard to imagine. But the Master says that the sign is obtained by unthinking the diversifications of the earth and by thinking about its flatness alone. So it cannot be merely an act of imagination, but it must have stemmed from the unthinking and thinking processes in a real situation. Otherwise the first formless trance could not have arisen on the support of the disappearance of such a sign, evidently of a form-type.

Hence the clue to organising the formless trance, or at least its contemplation, is the unthinking of all kinds of shapes and forms. It is at the same time the thinking of an unobstructed expanse of the spatial void, or mere consciousness, in the second trance. The third trance is devoid of everything inner or outer, while the fourth is said to consist of neither consciousness nor unconsciousness. The last stage of the formless trance is regarded as the highest stage of conscious trances and termed 'bhavagga' in Pāli and 'Bhavāgra' in Sanskrit. It is pointedly discussed in the Poṭṭha pāda Sutta of the Dīgha.

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Thus we come to the conclusion that the practice of unthinking is the most important of devices in the formless trance. The mental act of unthinking must therefore be as energetic as that of thinking. The former cannot be merely forgetting; for the forgetting is generally unconscious and hence cannot serve the purpose. However enigmatic, the device of unthinking is prominently mentioned in connection with the formless trances. It must have therefore been really and knowingly employed in organising these trances. So we should try to contemplate about the concept of a barren tract of land and extend it to an expanse of earthly surface and thence to make the sign vanish in the formless.

NOTES

[1]Divine Ear—There are ten types of supernormal powers and knowledge. One of them is the Dibba-Sota-Dhātu or the supernormal element of hearing or ear. This is often termed "divine ear" in English. The word "Dibba" (Divya in Sanskrit) means heavenly; hence the phenomenon of supernormal hearing came to be translated as a "divine ear". But it is not a gift from heaven. This power is said to be gradually gained by the methodical practice of yoga.

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XVI

Buddhaghosa on Method

General Statement

OUR SAVANT, Buddhaghosa, is an erudite commentator. His comments on the text are generally the means of knowing the import of the textual words, phrases, and sentences, available to us in an understandable form. But, as an expositor of methods of meditation and insight, he follows such a stereotyped style of exposition as to make us despair of our ever organising a trance of any category. We often come across ideas that smack of later innvoations either of the tradition he is faithfully following, or of his own. We have reasons to suspect that, even in following the old tradition, he is discriminately selective of the old traditional materials. So we are not reading the old and original commentaries in Pāli renderings of the ancient Simhālese language, but actually throughout his own Pāli ones.

We have already discussed, in the first phase of this research, several aspects of his discrepancies from and incompatibilities with the Master's precepts and their meaning expressed and implied. Nevertheless we cannot but turn over what he has to say on each topic of importance. When he says that he is voicing the old tradition, he can be contradicted only through the old text. His remarks and statements on a number of topics can however be easily amended, wherever we might find reasons to

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suspect that he is indulging in his favourite conception concerning meditation and insight.

Had he given us a full version of the old commentaries and not shortened them to suit his or our purpose, we would have little cause to complain as often as we had to do. But he has shortened them so much that it is difficult for us to understand them. So much that his plausible logical sequence is most disconcerting to us. We cannot take it for granted that whatever he wants us to believe is the Master's own method, import, and purpose. We can sometimes find him advocating a device or method obviously running counter to the Master's own teaching.

Under these circumstances, the best way to utilize the rigid directions and specifications of our savant is to compare and contrast them with those of the relative suttas and to sort out the possible ones. The suggestion of adopting such a process does not mean that the savant has knowingly made them so hard and rigid. His erudition in the text and the old commentaries cannot be doubted, neither can his loyalty to the old tradition. What is deprecable is his lack of differentiating the possible from the practically impossible.

First Formless Trance

The tenth chapter of the *Visuddhi-magga* treats of the four formless trances successively in five sections. The author of the work first introduces the subject, describes the method in general terms, and comments on each word and phrase of the textual formula. The literal translation of these sections will not serve any practical purpose, inasmuch as the references given in them would require a lot of technical knowledge to make them at least meaningful. The consequent deviations would make such a translation of little practical value. Hence we propose to touch only on their salient features quite enough for any appreciative reading of the sections.

Buddhaghosa writes: "After the Brahma-vihāras, one who is desirous of meditating on the spatial formless and limitless expanse organises and produces the fourth Jhāna on any one of the nine kasiṇas excepting the limited spatial kasiṇa." There are ten kasiṇas: the four elements of nature, four kinds of colour, the sky, and the light. Although he admits, in the section dealing

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with the limited sky-kasiṇa, that its counterpart sign arises as a globe of the sky and can be extended, if so desired, the savant is definitely of opinion that the limited sky-kasiṇa cannot be an efficient support for the organisation of the first formless trance.

In preparing the mental disposition for this trance, he quotes a passage from the text meaning in substance: "All sorts of quarrels, disputes, and fights ensue due to and out of 'rūpa' or material objects and forms; none of these occurs at all in 'arūppa', or the formless; thinking over such a demerit of 'rūpa', the practiser applies himself to the abandonment and cessation of it." Such a mental disposition would be very hard to gain and be established by any one of us, in spite of the recommendation so adroitly given to us by Buddhaghosa. We can readily be convinced of the sorrowful consequences coming out of the pursuit of the material objects and the world. But it will not be so easy to get us to discard the meditative form that is full of joy and pleasure and purified calmness.

Forestalling our possible controversy, he further says, rather unconvincingly: "Although the 'karaja-rūpa' (or the material body brought about through our past fruit-bearing action) is transcended by means of the fourth form trance, the practiser desires also to transcend the form arising out of the kasiṇa. For he thinks that such a form is also the counterpart sign of the material object." Perhaps he also thought that the matter required a little more explanation. So he has given two similes to demonstrate the sense clearly.

One of the two similes is the false fear experienced by someone being pursued in some wilderness by a serpent. Such a person is afraid of anything resembling a snake. Another simile is also the false fear produced on someone by some persons resembling the real enemy, at whose hands that person had already received grave injury, harm, or torments. These similes are assiduously applied to the situation and the conclusion is derived by comparison. The process is called "opamma samsandanam". In short, the running away through false fear in both cases is likened to the transcending of the gross body by means of the fourth form trance. The desire not to see those awe-inspiring resemblances of the snake and the enemy is compared to the desire to transcend the kasiṇa form. For the practiser

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notices that the kasiṇa form also is only the counterpart sign of the material object. He mentions the instance of other similes, such as a dog wounded by a wild boar, a terrified person threatened by a goblin, etc.

Demerit and Defect

Our savant seems to rely upon the consideration of the demerit and defect of the entire form trances for crossing over or going across them He must have been following the old tradition, even if he knew that such a mood or disposition as the cultivation of the above qualities is very difficult to gain. It is specially so, when he advises us to feel disinterested in the kasiṇa form that served as the support of the fourth form trance. Therefore he persuades us to think of the merit of the formless trance as much calmer and of more liberational bliss than the form trance.

Following the tradition traceable to several suttas in the text, he has to advise us to master each preceding trance before renouncing it to obtain a succeeding one. The principle of mastery is commonly fivefold. It is in short the ability of quickly organising a trance, instantly accomplishing it, maintaining the state of trance as long as one wishes, and speedily coming down therefrom. The last or the 5th step of mastery is the review of the situation in order to obtain a fruitful insight. The task of mastering a trance is seemingly so hard as likely to discourage us. Buddhaghosa has nothing more to say on the matter than what we have considered above.

We need not be discouraged. The Master has often spoken of the formless trance as if it were a natural sequence to the form trance. In the smaller discourse on the topic of 'Voidness' mentioned above the Master has dealt with the subject in a different way. We are at first taught to bring about the concept of a barren tract of land by means of unthinking habitations and their inhabitants. Then we are to conceive a plain surface of the earth, by unthinking all its obstructions and diversifications. This is virtually a prototype of a natural earth kasiṇa, not merely an after-image or even a counterpart sign of an artificial earth-kasiṇa advocated by Buddhaghosa. In other words, it is a form phenomenon in the shape of a plain surface as its support. It is then

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transcended by unthinking the form of the plain surface and thinking the formless expanse.

Such an expanse becomes limitless in the absence of the concept of forms. Although these trances are spoken of generally as devoid of forms, they are also devoid of concepts of sensible objects other than the visible ones as well. Because of the predominant role played by forms in the form trance, the choice of the words, such as 'form' and 'formless', when the form is absent, seems to have been made in the trances with and without forms. The Pāli term 'rūpa' is however much wider than 'form'. So the term in Pāli denotes the four elements and their compounds including all the physical objects, as well as the phenomena in a form trance. The confusion of terms in Pāli has already been mentioned elsewhere.

The meditative phenomenon of the first formless trance is said to be a spatial limitless expanse. It may be felt through a subtle feeling as such in the formless trance, or conceived as such in formless contemplation as given in the above-mentioned sutta on 'Suññatā'. In the former case the experience of an expanse may be of a real space, while in the latter it might have been initially conceptual, but later on not very different from that of a real space. When there is no shape, colour, and form in any space, we shall find hardly any difference between a real space and the conceptual one. In a dreaming state we have a sort of conceptual space, while in an awakened state we experience a real space. In meditation with open eyes and memory fixed on the subtle feeling, we may be conscious of a spatial expansion subtly felt through an expanding feeling. It may be taken as a real space.

In a conscious phenomenon there are five simultaneous concomitants, viz., contact, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness. But the last one is marked as prominent and named after it in each category of the mind mundane and supramundane. We are not fully aware of these concomitants separately, when we are working out a process of cognition from moment to moment. They are so subtle, quick, and mixed up. But the Master is said to detect and discern each of them as it arises, stays, and goes away. It is indeed an exceptional discerning power. We cannot aspire to cultivate a power of such fineness

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and strength. It is not however necessary to make the concomitants so minutely for our purpose.

Form to Formlessness

As already explained in appropriate sections and sub-sections of the first phase, the Sh ākya Prince organised the form trance quite naturally. Most probably the form phenomenon appeared before him beneath the rose-apple tree, by letting the pattern of visible objects pass lightly, without looking intently at those objects. He was in a disinterested mood; so the objects could not draw his attention towards them. This inattention to the visible or sensible objects lying outside made them loosen their materiality in his conception. Naturally the usual cognitive process gradually stopped and was replaced by a flow of 'appanā' or meditative absorptional process. Thus the Prince easily obtained the first form-trance. It is also not improbable that this trance was, then and there, developed by him further on to the fourth stage.

The same kind of disinterestedness in his mood and that of inattention to sensible, perceptible, and even conceptible objects and images later on possibly led him to organise the formless trance. As his autobiographical accounts show, he was ever in quest of "What is the perfect good?" Nothing could satisfy him, nothing short of his ideal good. Hence the joy and pleasure of form trances and even the bliss of purified calm and memory in the ultimate form trance could no longer hold him in their allurement. He was ever seeking a 'nissarana' or exit out of any stage of trance or state of mental existence. So he might have easily transcended the form phenomenon and obtained the formless trance. It was simply a device of unthinking or being inattentive to the form.

No Target

As we have described in the section concerning Haṭhayoga above, the device of 'target within and sight outside' is popular not only among the practisers of Haṭhayoga, but also among the followers of various types of Rāja-yoga or purely mental concentration. Herein the eyes are half-closed and half-opened and therefore the sight lies outside; the mind, however, is directed to an inner target so absorbingly that the eyes, though open

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to outside stimuli, do not respond to them. The difference between such devices and the Master's device lies in the conception of a target. The Master has stipulated none of the targets extant and recognised in other systems of meditation and insight. Even the cessation of consciousness and feeling is not actually regarded as the highest target in Buddhism. Nibbāna is in effect the absence of targets, inner or outer, objective or subjective, gross or subtle, perceptual or conceptual.

Moreover, the formless expanse is not spoken of as a target; it is mere support for the organising of a higher trance. Targets may be conceived and fixed as intervening stoppages of our shifting destination. Philosophically we can have a long dispute over a target, real or imaginary, but meditatively we may do away with any target or its conception. For we meditate without any pre-conception of a destination, concentrate on none of the psychic centres, and get totally absorbed in none of the trances, in the Master's system. In the discourse of 'Alagaddūpama' or the simile of a serpent, the 22nd sutta of the *Majjhimanikāya*, the Master clearly expressed this idea by means of 'kallūpama' or a simile of a rafter. Such a rafter, though very helpful in crossing over a deep expanse of water, is never borne on the head over the land after its use. Similarly, the teachings of the Master are, so says he, only for the crossing and not for keeping on holding them fast. Such a precept gives us a greater latitude in adjusting and adapting the old methods to our requirements in modern conditions.

Negative Method

It would sometimes appear that Buddhaghosa was giving us some negative methods instead of positive ones. He tries to be exhaustive more than comprehensible in his treatment of subjects in Buddhism. It is in keeping with the Abhidhamma tradition of the exhaustive treatment of each item in a classification. Such a method makes the topic difficult to comprehend and full of confusion, so far as our practical interests and purposes are concerned. We have already seen above how he fails or does not wish to disclose the phenomena of forms differentiated from the material objects. Hence we will not logically expect that his treatment of organising a formless trance will be clearer and

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more helpful than that of organising a form trance. Since he has rightly taken for granted that the formless trance can arise only on the removal of a form kasiṇa, the latter will have to be mastered in a fivefold way before attempting to bring about a semblance of the former. Such a procedure, if rigidly followed, will be enough to frighten away the novices and aspirants of Buddhistic formless trances. Buddhaghosa cannot possibly mean such rigidity.

The tradition is to be followed and Buddhaghosa has assiduously done so. We do not however know the extent to which he has followed the tradition. Although he deals with the preliminaries so thoroughly as to make us despair of ever being able to accomplishing them completely, he gives some rules on how to perform the chief device in a few sentences. They appear to us as a key to open the secret door to an intended trance. But he does not try to give us a full exposition of such short-cuts from the practical point of view. It might even appear to some expert meditationists that they were listening to a profound scholar in the *Visuddhi-magga*, but not to an experienced yogi.

The key we referred to above is found in the passage dealing with the first formless trance in the chapter on Āruppa of the *Visuddhi-magga*. It is as follows in substance.

Removal of Expanded Form

As explained in the earth kasiṇa, the monk should think over the demerit and defect of the form, after rising up from the fourth form trance. He is then to recollect that the limitless spatial expanse is calm and boundless so as to feel a strong aversion towards the form and to cultivate a liking to the formless. After that the monk is advised to organise any one of the nine kasiṇas, excepting the limited sky-kasiṇa. The context shows that the kasiṇa is to be organised upto the stage of the counterpart sign, though the latter is not explicitly mentioned.

Accordingly, the monk should spread this diffusible sign over the whole cosmic world, or as far as he desires. This sign arises out of the after-image obtained by constantly gazing at a disk termed kasiṇa, as will be remembered from the previous description of the kasiṇa. The counterpart sign is therefore a concep-

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tualized phenomenon as supple and workable as our psychic body.

Then adverting to the space or sky occupied by the spreading sign, and thinking about the counterpart sign all the while as 'the sky, the sky' or 'the boundless sky', the monk removes the kasiṇa. The process of removing the form-like sign from the underlying space is not to be thought of as the folding up of a mat or the lifting up or taking out of a thin bread from a baking pan. The process of removal is simply neither to advert to the sign, nor to keep it to the mind, nor to deliberate over it. Thus not adverting to the sign, not keeping it to the mind, and not deliberating over it, but entirely thinking over the space occupied by the sign as 'the sky, the sky', the monk removes the kasiṇa.

The kasiṇa, when it is thus removed, neither moves up, nor turns sideways. It is simply removed due to its unthinking and thinking of the underlying space as the sky, and thereby the removal of the sign or kasiṇa is made and likewise spoken of. And there appears only the sky after the removal of the kasiṇa. Whether it be the sky-kasiṇa removed, or the sky come in contact with the kasiṇa, or the sky separated from the sign, all these terms mean the same thing.

The monk then adverts to the new sign of the sky obtaining after the removal of the counterpart sign of the kasiṇa concerned again and again. He concentrates his mind on this new sign through deliberations in 'takka' and 'vitakka'. By doing so over and over again, the monk gets the impediments to meditation shaken off, the memory established, and the mind concentrated in samādhi through upacāra or the access or intermittent flow of samādhi. He frequently uses the new sign, contemplates over it, and develops it. Thus made perfect, his new sign arising in the sky is fully absorbed in appanā, like the form sign stemming from the earth and other kasiṇas.

Buddhaghosa provides an imagery to his description of this section for elucidation. If we suppose a man watching a conveyance having a small door screened with a coloured cloth and the screen be blown aside, the man will find himself looking at the sky in the uncovered door. Similarly the monk, who might be at first meditating on the kasiṇa circle and then removes the kasiṇa sign suddenly, will see the sky in the same sign. This

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imagery indirectly hints that our savant is also giving us his own experience of the formless sky. If so, it is possible also for us to organise the trance even now, in spite of his rigid stipulations concerning the preliminaries.

Mahatika on Removal

The commentary on this section of the *Visuddhi-magga* has something more to elucidate on the topic of the limited sky as an object for meditation. It will be recalled that there are mainly ten kasiṇa circles to practise upon for producing the form sign. Four of them are the four natural elements, viz., earth, water, fire, and air. Out of these four, the earth kasiṇa is the most important and is consequently extensively treated of. The treatment of other kasiṇas is briefly given and that of the earth kasiṇa is always referred to for details. The next four kasiṇa circles are those of colours, viz., blue, yellow, red, and white. The remaining two are light and the limited sky. The difference between the fire kasiṇa and the light kasiṇa is apparently that of flame and illumination such as daylight.

The commentary says that the light kasiṇa partakes of colour. So it is also a particular colour. The counterpart sign obtained in this light kasiṇa can be utilized for learning or organising the sky sign. However, the limited sky kasiṇa is not useful for this purpose. For the removal of the limited sky kasiṇa will bring about the form sign and not the sign of the unlimited sky. The removal of the kasiṇa is also explicitly explained as the removing of the kasiṇa form such as that of the earth kasiṇa, etc. Such a kasiṇa form served as a support of the fourth form trance as well.

Explaining the idea and import of removal further, the commentator says that the kasiṇa supporting the fourth form trance is not in the least to be thought over. The sky in contact with the kasiṇa is to be kept in mind as "the sky, the sky". When, through the influence of such contemplation, there arises the new sign becoming the sky, then and there only is the removal of the kasiṇa said to be completed. The commentator has only clarified the passage we have given above in substance. Thus the import of the removal of the kasiṇa is definitely establi-

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shed on the device of not thinking about the kasiṇa or the support of the form trance.

Asvaghosa on the Formless

The poet Aśvaghoṣa, briefly describing the eight out of nine gradual trances in the 12th canto of the *Buddha-carita*, touches on the first formless trance as follows: "Coming down from that samādhi (the fourth dhyāna, jhāna in Pāli), a learned intelligent man attains knowledge, through the observation of defects and evils to which the body-holders (beings) are subject, for the purpose of liberation from the body (59th stanza). Then leaving off that meditation and being determined to achieve a specially superior one, the learned man becomes disinterested even in the form, as his doing so in the material world of desires (60th stanza)."

Then the poet presents a device apparently more philosophical than meditative. He writes: "Whichever is empty in this body should be at first thought of as the sky. Thereafter even in the solid matter the sky is realised (61st stanza)." The idea expressed in the last two stanzas is however not consistent. For the form is devoid of solidity and he does not mention the sky or space occupied by a solid body. Moreover, a philosophical type of thinking cannot be of much use for a meditative excursion, as we find it proved in the Master's own experience. It appears that the organisation of formless trances was probably out of vogue in the poet's time, at least in the sect of Buddhism to which he belonged. Otherwise he would not have given us such an imperfect and incongruous device to organise a basic trance.

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XVII

Upatissa on Method

Sphere of Space

THE VIMUTTI-MAGGA, or the Path of Freedom as noticed in the first phase of this research, is said to be a work by a certain monk of the Buddhist Order named Upatissa. The original work is believed to have been written in Pāli. It is in many places not very different from similar portions of the *Visuddhi-maggo*. Since the book in English is at least the third rendering of the original work, we cannot depend much upon it for important details. Nevertheless the deviation from the *Visuddhi-magga* is sometimes very helpful to estimate the extent of the tradition, which both works profess to follow. Moreover, the question-and-answer method of treatment followed in the *Vimutti-magga* gives us a clear view of each item of the section on various subjects of Buddhism.

In the eighth chapter of this work we find the four formless trances treated of after the treatment of the four form trances. These four formless trances bear names corresponding to those of the Pāli text and commentary. The first one is named the sphere of the infinity of space and nearly corresponds to the first formless trance of the Canon. The substance of descriptions found in the above-mentioned work is given in the following paragraphs as clearly as possible.

The sphere of space is defined as the "element of space and

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vacuity". Vacuity is said to be "untouched by the four primaries". The thinking of the idea that space is infinite makes the mind tranquil. It is done so "by means of the perception of limitless space". Because of the support and the trance upon it being similar, infinite space also means "the entering into limitless space". For the same reason "the mind and the mental property which enter space are called sphere of space". Since the nature of space is boundless, "this boundless nature is the sphere of space". Thus, according to this work, the sphere of space is tantamount to boundlessness. It is the element of space and vacuity untouched by the four primary elements. Buddhistic metaphysical theory does not regard space as a separate physical element. It is merely the empty place between intervening objects.

The sphere of space is defined here in such a way as to leave no doubt about its nature of vacuity and boundlessness. It further means that it has no existence separate from the four physical elements intervening with it. Hence its perception, attainment through meditation, and nature of being boundless are one and the same thing. This idea is much clearer herein than what we find in the Āruppa chapter of Buddhaghosa's work, *Visuddhi-magga*. There is in fact no great difference between the physical nature of space and the psychological conception of emptiness, while a trance is a fuller realisation of both of them than what we experience in our day-to-day life.

Similarity in Method

Apart from his clear definition of space and its sphere, Upatissa has nothing more to suggest for its organisation than what our savant, Buddhaghosa, has done so thoroughly in his work. For Upatissa says: "Now, the yogin, who has acquired boundless happiness in the fourth meditation, wishes to enjoy the space-concentration and to transcend the realm of form. He considers thus: Concentration of form is coarse; space-concentration is fine. That yogin sees the tribulation of form and the merits of space-concentration."

We find in the above passage the same process as in the Pāli work. The first formless trance is organised after the attainment of the fourth form trance. We are asked to see the difficulty

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arising from form and the merits of the formless. This similarity of the process in the two works shows that both the savants are following a similar tradition with little difference on this topic. By the way it is also a matter of disappointment for us. For we do not discover any key to cross over the abyss lying between the form and the formless other than the common place precept of little comfort.

The earth kasiṇa is also mentioned to be abandoned by the above process. The profound but little known author says: "That yogin having seen form and the great tribulations thereof and the merits of space concentration, rises from the (form) concentration, abandons the earth sign and practises space-concentration." What is problematic in such a precept is the fact that the form trance will appear to us neither as coarse, nor as full of tribulations. The formless trance may certainly be imagined by us to be of more excellence than the content of the form trance we are unwilling so easily to relinquish. The tribulation applicable to the material plane cannot be visualized so smoothly in the form plane obtained through the form trance.

The author writes further on: "He (the yogin) should dwell on space regarding it as an infinite object. If he meditates thus, he quickly completes the destruction of the earth sign and his mind rises out of the earth sign and goes beyond the earth sign to space. Through the acquisition of facility in the perception of the sphere of the infinity of space he attains to fixed meditation, Jhāna." Again the author has nothing more to add to his two devices already commented upon. His assurance for the attainment of space is effective, only after the destruction of the earth sign or the form trance. It is a pity that some of our learned teachers do not seem to be reflecting on the possibility and impossibility of the things they deal with. They go on with their exposition and explanation uncritically. They should have at least given us a personal touch on matters not directly irritating to the sense of our moral propriety and religious sobriety.

Inattention to Perception

He concludes: 'That yogin by passing entirely beyond perception of form, by the disappearance of the perception of impact, by being freed from attention to perception of diversity

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thinking—Infinite is space—enters into and abides in the sphere of infinite space." The phrase 'being freed from attention to perception of diversity' is really very significant. The attention to perception of diversity is a really natural device employed daily by us. If we could withhold this attention to perception, we would find a secret key to the formless.

Explaining the above-mentioned phrase further, the author writes: "(The phrase) 'by being freed from attention to perception of diversity,' means the destruction of the sense-states. Again, 'the surpassing of all form perception' is taught as the attainment of the realm of the formless. The 'disappearance of the perception of impact' is taught as the destruction of the outer disturbance to that concentration (of the formless) and the purification of imperturbability."

The perception of impact referred to above is obviously the 'Paṭigha saññā in the Pāli text. Buddhaghosa explains the terms as the perception produced by the impact of the sense-organs such as eyes, etc. and the supports or stimuli of sensible objects such as rūpa, etc. The term is however clarified by the author as "the perception of visible objects, of sounds, of odours, of flavours, and of tangibles". The outer disturbance to the formless trance is caused by the perception of such an impact. By its disappearance, the outer disturbance is destroyed. The inner disturbance, on the other hand, is destroyed, when one is "freed from attention to perception of diversity". The latter term is explained as "the perception, the perceiving, the state of having perceived . . . ." The Pāli term equivalent to diversity is fully explained by Buddhaghosa; the gist of the explanation is here given by the author; the former, however, is much clearer.

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XVIII

The Master's Discovery of Method

Experience versus Method

ANY METHOD of meditation, howsoever systematized, will always fall short of an actual experience of it. The phenomenon of meditative experience becomes manifest under certain mental dispositions and physical conditions not directly amenable to a set of rules or a system of methods. A method often limits the freedom of action and experiment so necessary to obtain some successful operation in meditation. It is very often difficult to estimate the efficacy of rules pertaining to a particular stage of meditation with respect to the practiser himself. When the rules are few and simple, he will disbelieve their professed efficacy. If they are many and hard, he may be disinclined to the practice itself. A well-tried method fully and greatly efficacious in some cases may be totally ineffective in other cases. There are many instances of these differing types of persons in the text and the commentary.

The autobiographical accounts of the Buddha himself prove beyond doubt that the traditional method of meditation had been of little use to him. Although he had all the prerequisites and qualifications for the highest stage of meditation and the deepest layer of insight, he had to wait six laborious years for Buddhahood. The methods of organising a trance to the sphere of nothingness advocated and taught by Ālāra-kālāma were of

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little avail to the Bodhisattva. The then future Buddha was unable to develop this meditative sphere any further.

He had to seek Uddaka-Rāmaputta in order to find an exit from this nothingness and reach the sphere of non-perceptible perception. The six years' austerities undergone by him to little avail amply showed that even time-honoured practices were of little value to him. The breathing exercises so highly spoken of in the ancient and modern works on yoga were doggedly conducted by him. These exercises of respiration might have benefited him indirectly, but he does not seem to have appreciated the benefit. According to the section on the rousing of the inner physicopsychic power known as kuṇḍalini, such a mudrā of restraining the breath as he accomplished should have fulfilled its purpose. This section is stated briefly, or described in more or less detail, in a number of works on Haṭhayoga, Laya-yoga, and Rājayoga. The Bodhisattva either ignored it, or regarded the feat as of little service to his quest.

Hence meditative experience is far superior to any method whatsoever. The experiment of the Bodhisattva has clearly proved this. His first experience of the form trance beneath the rose-apple tree was obtained directly without the use of any known method. The method might have also been remembered by him together with the form trance he organised and dwelt in then. But the text has recorded nothing about it. The commentary suggests the method to be the observation of respiration; while the thinking over the rising up and the setting down of the world was the method suggested by Aśvaghoṣa in the 9th stanza of the 5th canto in his work, the *Buddha-carita*.

The commentary's suggestion is evidently a sort of anachronism, a later development being imposed on an earlier event. For the method of Buddhistic ānāpāna is characteristically a later development after the failure of the breathing exercises mentioned above. The next suggestion is probably too mature to be seriously entertained so early in the life of the Shākya Prince. Moreover, such deliberations are often conducted after the trance. We may therefore fairly conclude that the Shākya Prince, Siddhārtha, or Bodhisattva, had tried all the known traditional methods of purification and organisation and found them fundamentally inappropriate to his ideal quest.

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A Series of Discoveries

His first discovery is decidedly the form trance organised by him under the shade of the rose-apple tree before his great renunciation. From the miracle of the shadow of the tree[1] not turning away from the young prince and other details of its occurrence, the time of this trance appears to be the forenoon of the first month of the farming or seeding season. The method might have been a direct approach to the form plane already and fully dealt with in the first phase of this research. The method of direct approach to a desired stage, state, and plane of meditation, trance, and existence respectively, appears to be a dominant habit of the Master. The direct approach is a positive method unifying the means and the end.

His next discovery is the recognition of this form trance as an effective way to perfect knowledge and enlightenment. The method of such recognition is not found recorded in the text. It was, however, manifest to him, not merely a guess. At least it was nothing short of a flash of intuition purified by six years' austerities, breathing exercises, and fasting. The accounts of this unique experience of the Bodhisattva can be read in the 36th, 85th, and 100th suttas of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. In meditation the recognition of a state of trance is very important. It helps us to organise the particular trance by the method of a direct approach to that trance whenever we like to do so.

The third discovery of the Bodhisattva might be logically understood to be the meditative poise of mind and body maintained by him throughout the entire series of trances till it was immersed in the unfathomable depths of the ultimate trance of the cessation. Under these circumstances there does not arise a question of methods. The Prince or Bodhisattva had no time to think over them; they did not matter for him in the least; he had gained a unique poise, well-balanced between the extremes of mind and body; he was patient enough to maintain it.

When he was satisfied with the attainment of basic trances, it is but natural that he should have thought to channellize the power thus gained into different spheres of knowledge. Then there followed an ever-increasing series of discoveries recorded and preserved in the Buddhistic Canon, especially in the Sutta

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Pitaka. Herein also we do not find the method utilized by him. Probably he had no method then and there. The irresistible power and force of the basic trances organised by him were enough to accomplish the task he was minded to perform.

Origin of Method

So long as the Prince or Bodhisattva was not thinking of teaching other people, he had little need to search for a way to express his ideas effectively. Subjectively considered, he was satisfied with himself; all his doubts had evaporated and vanished; he was a perfectly liberated being; an arhat is no longer in any bondage; he was in some respects much more than an arhat. He was a perfect omniscient Buddha. Apart from the subtle and supernormal power gained naturally from the basic trances, he might have felt no need or inclination to cultivate and develop then and there other supernormal powers specifically.

After his decision to disseminate the knowledge gained through his perfect enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, he had to think over a plan for such dissemination and a set of rules for his method. The plan is observable in his mental survey of likely candidates worthy of imparting the knowledge: so often repeated in the story of enlightenment found in the canon. The set of rules seems to have been firstly formulated in the middle way, the way leading to the cessation of suffering in the fourfold system, and virtually the eightfold path of Buddhism. The exposition of the way is singularly characteristic of the Buddha's method of gradually divulging the secrets of his unique achievement in meditation and insight.

The middle way, however, does not lie in the middle of any measure, standard, or scale. It is roughly the avoidance of extremes in indulgence either of sensual pleasure or of purposeless austerities. But substantially it is the way of speaking in advocating his system to the people engrossed with the extremes of temperament and judgement. The way or path is therefore the method discovered, developed and taught by the Buddha. We have a number of collected groups of suttas, such as the Sati-paṭṭhāna, Indriya, Iddhi-pāda, Jhāna, and Ānāpāna Samyuttas in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, wherein the Master has

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rightly claimed that he himself is the originator of these methods. He declares emphatically in each of the suttas that he had himself organised and developed the methods of these specific devices. They are all oriented indeed towards liberation and Nibbāna.

The origin of the method is therefore to be sought in the above collected groups of suttas, each of which contains opening phrases meaning in substance that the methods of organising them were discovered by him either before or after his enlightenment. There are reasons to believe that he had been practising these devices and many more contrivances in his own fashion long before his perfect enlightenment. All of these practices could not have been undertaken, followed, and completed in a single night under the Bodhi tree, as generally conceived, believed, and taken for granted. The details of such practices found in the 3rd, 19th, and 128th suttas of the *Majjhima-nikāya* show that there were intervals of time in progressing along the line of practices adopted by him. The climax of all these achievements was however reached under the Bodhi tree.

Method of Receding Inwards

The method of receding inwards from an initially outward attention to a sensible object or a pattern of such objects appears to be a predominant feature in the nine gradual and basic trances. It was, to all appearances, at first discovered under the rose-apple tree, which resulted in the organisation of the first form trance. The agricultural land or the earth must have appeared before him as it does before us. Due to his special mental disposition, the piece of land gradually must have lost its meaning as regards its physical properties; the diverse shapes then seemingly presented themselves in a pattern: the pattern began to separate itself from its objective support of matter and its material concept. The formal aspect of this pattern then began to assert itself with the dwindling of mental deliberations in vitakka and vicāra. The successive passages of the mind, from the physical properties of the sensible objects to their meaningless shapes, from such diverse shapes to their pattern, from the unified pattern to the assumption of the

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formal aspect, must have impressed him much with this receding method of organising a trance.

The method of gradually making the attention recede from the outward to the inward is evidently an exceptionally unique discovery of the Shākya Prince, the Bodhisattva, or the Buddha. It was for this reason that we could not accept the suggestion of the device of ānāpāna as a preliminary one to the organisation of the first form trance and thence its development to the fourth stage. The text does not mention it. It is the commentary that would have it so, and we mentioned it only as a tentative suggestion and found it a misfit.[2]

The Ānāpāna Samyutta of the *Samyutta-nikāya* has of course a sutta named 'Padipopama',[3] or the simile of a lamp, saying that the Buddha used to organise it frequently before his enlightenment. He further says that this vihāra[4] neither tired his body nor troubled his eyes. His mind was also liberated thereby from the underlying impediments to arhatship.

Then in the same sutta the Master goes on encouraging his disciples to keep the ānāpāna well in mind. If a monk wishes to organise the first, second, third, and fourth form trances, he should mind the device well. If a monk wishes to obtain each of the four formless trances, he should likewise perform it well. Similarly, if one is desirous of attaining the cessation of perception-cum-consciousness and feeling, one is advised to remember the observation on respiration quite well. The last stage is further enlarged to include the state of Nibbāna, wherein anything felt is not accepted as desirable. All the feelings will be extinguished if they are not accepted. The state of extinction is likened to that of a lamp being extinguished with the ending of the wick and the finishing of the fuel. Such is the credit paid by the Buddha to his own method of observation on respiration.

The above sutta shows that this device was a later development to popularize the nine gradual trances among the clergy and the laity. So were the four consolidated observations on the body, feeling, mind, and dhammas known as sati-paṭṭhāna. But the highest credit is paid to the little understood device of 'Iddhipāda Samyutta'.

With the passage of time, even during the life-time of the

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Master, the earlier simple methods had to be modified, enlarged, and consolidated to suit the capacity, temperament, and critical attitude of the ever-increasing number of disciples. Simple things did not satisfy the later clergy and sophisticated laity. The latter came up and even requested the Master to let some of his monks exhibit their supernormal powers to the people at large.

Hence the Master had either to revise the earlier methods, or invent new ones. So we have a few revisions of the observation on respiration, the simple ānāpāna becoming more and more formidable at each revision. The four observations of Sati-paṭṭhāna are obviously a consolidated course of separate practices. There are several instances of such enlargements and consolidations, but it is beyond the scope of this research to dwell upon this feature of the Canon.

To resume our discussion of the method of receding inwards, it is not the same as the observation on respiration through the feeling or even of the inner feeling and mental fluctuations, which we have learned about in the discourse of Sati-Paṭṭhāna. The Haṭhayoga device of the 'eye-sight remaining outside and the target fixed inside' is far from resembling this method. In the device of 'unthinking and inattention[5] mentioned elsewhere, this method has indeed some resemblance to it; but the former is basically different from the latter.

In the mentally receding practice, we loosen the mental hold of the visible object steadily. We hold the visible object and keep on holding it through our sense and mind, ordinarily in our everyday life. And so we do not let the object drop off the mind, because of our unawareness of the fact that it is we ourselves who are mentally holding the object. The precept of the Master given and found in the discourse of the void clearly points to this fact; it is of course with the difference that the unthinking of the diverse objects in that sutta is an active process and the loosening of the mental hold of the objects in this case is a receding process.

Receding Process

According to the cognitive process of Buddhistic psychology, the initial disturbance of the passive flow of the mental substra-

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tum is caused by the outside disturbance coming into contact with the inner organism. The latter disturbance is the stimulus coming from some sensible or perceptible objects and striking any one of the sense-organs. The stimulus strikes the sense-organ and the mental stuff simultaneously. The mental stuff is regarded as the passive mind, but it shows its activity in the cognitive process. The mind is passive, if we are not aware of its fluctuations or cannot direct and control them. In a trance the mind is never passive, and each moment of its flow is, during the trance, active. If passive moments occur, they will constitute gaps in the flow of an active trance. The gaps will be spoken of as moments of coming out of the trance.

When the outside stimulus strikes the sense-organ and the mind simultaneously, the mind attends to the relative sense-organ considered as the sense-door. The simultaneous striking of both the sense-organ and the mind by the outside stimulus may appear strange, but the authorities of Buddhistic psychology are definite about it. Buddhaghosa furnishes us with the simile of a bird perching upon the branch of a tree and casting its shadow on the ground simultaneously. There should pass a time, however infinitesimal, for the stimulus to reach the mind after its striking the sense-organ. It is apparently true, but rightly considered it should be actually a simultaneous phenomenon. For, no sense consciousness may occur without the mind playing a simultaneous role, direct or indirect. In meditation we have to differentiate mental consciousness from the sensuous one.

Thus struck simultaneously by the stimulus, the mind, becoming conscious of the disturbance, adverts or attends to the source of the stimulation. It is effected by the sense-door or organ concerned. The attending mind is the primary one and thought to be situated in or rather arising from the heart. From the meditational point of view, it makes no difference whether the seat of the mind is the heart or the brain. The oriental system of meditation has generally regarded the heart as the seat of the mind.

Due to the mind adverting to the stimulus, sensuous consciousness arises. Immediately after the conscious sensation, the sensation, thus aroused by the stimulus, is received by the

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primary mind. Thus received, the sensation is investigated by an inner or keener mind termed mind-consciousness. The seat of the latter mind is also said to be, as that of the primary mind, the heart. And this is the mind we are mostly concerned with. There are three functions of the primary mind. Firstly, it adverts to the disturbance stemming from the outside. And secondly, and thirdly it receives the sensation obtained, on the agreeable or disagreeable supports, through the sense-door. The varieties of mind should not confuse the reader, if we regard them as mere differentiations, classifications, types, qualities, or functions.

The number of such differentiated minds is counted as eighty-nine or one hundred and twenty-one in all. Although the mind is multiple, it operates one at a time only. No two minds operate at the same time. This stipulation makes the subject easier to understand. When we have only one mind at a time, the sequence of many minds will not be confusing. For we cannot conceive of a single or any one mind existing without fluctuations and modifications throughout our life. Because of its changeability from moment to moment, we can hope to organise its flow as we desire.

After the investigating mind, a wonderful mind-consciousness comes into operation. The function of this mind is the determining of the disturbance so far borne through the preceding mental processes. This mind determines the object and assigns it to its proper place in the mental field. From the disturbance in the substratum of the passive mind to this mind determining the sensible or perceptible object, the cognitive process is automatic. When the passive flow of our mind is disturbed by an object serving as a stimulus, the process is automatically set in motion and arrives, through stated modifications, at this stage.

It is so in the ordinary state of our everyday life. But in our meditative practice, we can mould the key-points of this automatic process in a way favourable to our meditative requirements. Were it not so, we could never have aspired to organise form and formless trances in a natural way, as we understand the method followed by the Prince or Bodhisattva to be. The receding method should therefore be evaluated properly. The

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method of receding inwards, once understood and followed, will be found comparatively easy and profoundly significant.

The above five steps of the cognitive process, viz., the adverting, sensuous consciousness, reception, investigation, and determining, are consecutive. Each of them rises up and goes down in one mental moment. The first and the fifth are the functions of the mind. They are morally neutral and not the result of our past fruitful action. They look thus seemingly manageable, adaptable, and controllable. The difficulty lies in the fact that each of them stays only for a single mental moment. Although they are both automatic in the cognitive process set in motion by an outward disturbance, the practice of mentally receding inwards may check their automatic flow onwards. If we happen to do so, the determining function of the higher or keener mind may be suspended for a moment or moments.

In such a situation, the stimulus or stimuli from the outside object or objects may terminate without getting it or them determined by our higher mind. It will be so in the perceptual process. In the special case, say, of a visual process, the stimulus stemming from the visible objects will give rise to shapes and colours, or a pattern of them before our eyes. Since their reception and investigation determination depend on adverting, so if we recede inward, they will obviously appear as mere forms suspended in space.[6] This is the unmistakable sign of a form trance we have already dealt with in the first phase.

The function of adverting to the stimulus is comparatively difficult to check. It is automatic and lasts for a single mental moment in a perceptual proceess of cognition. If we let it slip on, it will pass immediately on to a perceptual consciousness. If we totally ignore this function, we shall fall into the current of passive mental moments and remain unconscious of the cognitive process. Hence we are to seek a middle way between the two extremes. The middle way would be the practice of receding inwards by averting this adverting mind from slipping on to the next step in the perceptual process, while preventing the attentive mind from falling or relasping into the original state of passive mental torpor.

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The mind receding inwards will thus check its adverting function at its very inception. Consequently there will be a total break of the usual course in the perceptual process just for a moment or moments. The result of such a break would be the complete absence or disappearance of all the sensibles or perceptibles from our mental field. Even if the eyes, ears. and other sense-organs may frequently be exposed to their respective stimuli, we shall have no perception of any sensuous object. This is indeed the guiding sign of formlessness. Thus we find that the method of mentally receding inwards leads us gradually to the form state, and thence, by the same method, we arrive at the formless state, without making any change in our method and approach.

Master's Approach

When the Shākya Prince was seated under the cool shade of the rose-apple tree, he did not probably know that he was organising the first form trance. He was of course in a mood of meditation; as otherwise he would not have sought a lonely place as recorded in the relative chapter of the *Lalita-vistara* and the related canto of the *Buddha-carita.* The tradition kept up in the Commentary has decidedly certain flaws, so much so that we cannot accept the authenticity of certain details given therein. In those accounts also, the Bodhisatto is said to have organised the trance only when he was left alone.

He could not have resorted to devices developed and taught by him later on. So the device of the observation on respirations can be set aside. Even though the discourse on the 'Simile of a Lamp' found in the *Ānāpāna Samyutta* and cited elsewhere proves that he discovered the device before his enlightenment, the details themselves are enough to show that the device was a later development. Otherwise he would have gone further and reached the ultimate ninth trance then and there, and not have stopped with the form trance alone.

He was in a fitting mood for meditation. He was meditative without knowing that he was doing so. There was no target, no objective, and no fixation of a centre in his meditation; nor was it merely for sport or amusement.

He knew it only when he entered into the first trance. This

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could not have happened if he was not already receding inwards from the view presented to his eyes. The device of organising the first form trance, so profusely dealt with in the *Visuddhi-magga* by Buddhaghosa, on the earth kasiṇa, either artificial or natural, or on the ploughed field, is very unlikely to have been adopted by the Prince at this stage. Since ancient times there has always been however a tradition of meditation as something to be done inwardly. The Shākya Prince must have fully imbibed the spirit of this ancient tradition, before he embarked on the ambitious quest of his own. Hence the inward attention of the Prince must have gradually turned into a process of receding inwards.

In the practice of meditation, the mind is to be kept attentive, either outwardly on some physical object selected for concentration, or inwards on some mental object convenient for meditation, or on some psychic centre visualized or imagined. In the Buddhistic system of meditation also, the general rules of procedure regarding attentiveness would not much differ in principle from the general practice. But the process of receding inwards appears to be a speciality, discovered and followed by the Bodhisattva, unknowingly before and knowingly after his remembrance of the first trance, which had occurred previously under the rose-apple tree in Kapilavastu. Thus the organisation of the first trance by the process of mentally receding inwards seems to be a pivot, on which his system of meditation turns. This process can be conveniently understood by a combined method of 'amanasikāra' or unthinking and 'manasikāra' or thinking, separately explained in connection with the discourse on the void, the 121st sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya.*

From what has been said above and explained in connection with the principal suttas on meditation, such as the Sati-Paṭṭhāna, we can fairly and logically conclude that the approach of the Prince, Bodhisattva, and Buddha, to meditation, methods of organising it, and the targets to hit or destinations to reach, was predominantly characteristic of his mental disposition evinced throughout his unique career. His approach to meditation was unknowingly determined at the very first experience of his first trance: it was devoid of any objective and subjective target and destination; it did not entertain any false hopes and

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fears; the target, if any, was where meditation terminated and arose no more. Such a disposition of mind naturally found a clue to a natural method unheard of before, as he has repeatedly declared.

This very approach is seen in his non-committal attitude concerning the main metaphysical questions. He did not accept any conjecture about them; hence he did not involve himself in any philosophical problem stemming from such conjectures. He did not entertain anything that could not be directly known and determined through meditation and insights derived therefrom. Thus early Buddhism is based on his meditative experience and the later on his system of meditation. The nucleus of this system was provided by the first trance he had, as mentioned above, suddenly discovered under the rose-apple tree. And later on it was developed, through the successive form and formless trances, to the cessation of consciousness and feeling. The method of accumulating this nucleus might have been the process of mentally receding inwards.

Poise of Receding Inwards

The poise of the mind and body in meditation is very important. We can meditate for a longer duration of time, provided we keep the poise of the mind and body correct. The poise is correct if one is able to maintain the same position, as it was on the first occasion of meditative experience gained by that person. We know that, when the physical or material body assumes a certain position, our mind also seems to assume it. Similarly, when the mind settles down in meditation, the body also seems to do so. In meditative parlance, the body overflows with the mental content such as feeling, when the latter spreads in consonance with meditation. In the second discourse on the fruit of the renunciated life in the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the experience of the four trances is similarly explained by the Master.

Apart from other organs of sense and faculties peculiar to Buddhism, the feeling seems to be a major link between the mind and the body. The physical body begins to be felt as a sort of mental one in meditation, even if it be continued for a little while. We have dealt enough with this topic in the obser-

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vation on the feeling in the Sati-Paṭṭhāna.[7] So the Buddhistic principle in meditation is not to separate the mind and the body so rigidly, as is done in some other systems. The mind is made at first coextensive with the body, and then the former is left to lead the latter, as it pleases. Hence in the practice of ānāpāna, the memory or the mind is trained to follow each movement of respiration, while in that of vedanā, the mind or memory is to be spread as wide as the feeling within the body.

The poise in meditation is therefore a sort of meditative position of the mind and body as well. The maintaining of such a position and poise will be tantamount to a formation of meditation itself. So the keeping up of the poise will necessarily help in maintaining the stage of meditation we arrive at. Now, if we follow the generally accepted method of meditation, the attention will have to be directed either outwards or inwards. In an outward direction of meditation, we shall be concentrating on some outside object, and the poise will be likewise oriented. If it be inward, our concentration will be turned backwards, inside the body, to some inner spot or centre, imaginary, conceptual, or visualized. Since the backward concentration strains the physical eyes to some extent, the poise will also be strained in unison with the effort.

Some Instances

We have some clear instances in the text that the Bodhisattva must have followed, before his enlightenment, strenuous methods other than those discovered and practised later on by himself. So he must have to suffer thereby from the fatigue or the overstraining of the bodily organs. In the above-mentioned discourse on the "Simile of a Lamp", the Master therefore said to the monks: "I also, O Monks, before the enlightenment, when I was still unenlightened and a Bodhisatto, used to pass the time frequently with the trance arisen out of the memory kept up on Ānāpāna. To me, O Monks, who used to pass the time frequently with this, neither the body gave pain, nor the eyes . . ." This passage shows that the Bodhisatto is comparing two systems of meditation, one of them being the Ānāpāna of his own discovery and the other probably practised by him temporarily and tentatively some time before his enlightenment.

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NOTES

[1]"The miracle of the shadow of the tree'—This miracle is said to have happened, when the Shākya Prince Siddhārtha was one day meditating beneath a rose-apple tree on his father's farmland in Kapilavastu. He was so absorbed in meditation that he quickly attained the first jhāna. Some authorities say that he obtained all the four jhānas then and there. But all authorities unanimously agree that his jhāna or trance was so deep and powerful that a miracle happened.

This was a miracle, as he did not knowingly bring it about. The shadow of the tree he sat under did not move from where it stood before the Prince's trance, while that of the other trees moved as usual. The sun was moving as usual; but the shadow that was caused evidently by the sun was checked and remained stationary. Hence the shadow was a miracle of the meditating Prince Siddhārth.

[2]Vihāra—As the word "Viharati" is invariably used for 'passing the time' in meditative or religious pursuits, so this word "Vihāra" is a general term used for a meditative pursuit. It is indicative of a calm and quiet state of mind continued for a pretty long time. Even the vihāra signifying the monastery was probably allied with the quietude of the site and the meditators who inhabited it.

[3]A misfit—See the section 'Ānāpāna a Misfit'.

[4]'Padipopoma'—The 8th sutta of the Ānāpāna samyutta'.

[5]Unthinking and inattention—See the section 'Non-thinking;' for unthink; see the section 'Inattention to Perception'.

[6]"Mere forms suspended in space'—The experience of a form trance is not described anywhere in the text, nor in the commentary, and nor in the *Visuddhi-maggo*. The notion of such a trance can be gained however by that of the appearance of visible objects as mere forms suspended in space. The form trance has been fully dealt with in the first phase of this research. In short, we may compare the form experience with the material one like this: Material objects are felt as gross, heavy, and hard; the form shapes will appear to us as subtle or fine, light, and very soft. The former (objects) are pleasant and unpleasant; the latter (shapes) will always look pleasant. The former come in our ordinary experience; the latter can be seen only in a state of trance.

[7]Feeling in the Sati-Paṭṭhāna—See the Chapter on Vedanā-Anupassanā or Observation of Feeling'.

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XIX

Phenomena of Light and Forms in Meditation

Scrutiny

AN EXCEPTIONAL instance of meditative phenomena is found in the Upakkilesa Sutta, the 128th discourse of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. Herein we find three monks of the Buddhistic Order practising meditation together. Their names were Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila. They were visited by the Master. After the usual inquiry about their health, welfare, and observance of rules of conduct, the Master asked them if they had obtained some superhuman dhammas and supernormal special knowledge. Anuruddha, on their behalf also, answered that they witnessed the meditative light and visualization of forms. They knew both of these phenomena, they said. Both of them however disappeared quickly; but they did not know the ause of such a disappearance, they added.

Upon this, the Master opened an important discourse on the topic of the impediments to trance and insight. He said: "Anuruddha! you should know the cause thereof. For, I too, before the enlightenment, when I was still unenlightened and only a Bodhisatto, witnessed the meditative light and visualization of forms. Both of these phenomena disappeared quickly.

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Then I thought; what is the cause, and what is the reason why my meditative light and visualization of forms disappear?

The Master told them at length how he searched for the cause and reason for such a disappearance of the light and the visualization of forms. He found out that it was doubt about the phenomena which caused their disappearance. He said that he tried to raise no doubt about the phenomena. Then the light and the visualization of forms appeared, but they again disappeared quickly. Again he searched for the cause and the reason, and found out that it was 'amanasikāra' or not keeping the phenomena well in mind. In this manner, he described eleven impediments to trance and insight, one by one, with a number of fitting similes.

Meditative Light

The meditative light is a general or common phenomenon witnessed by many practisers of meditation. But they do not investigate the phenomenon in the manner the Master is reported in this sutta to have done so thoroughly. Because of their little or incomplete investigation into the matter, the practisers often fail to maintain the light, as long as they wish to. The light appears suddenly and disappears likewise. Probably for this reason, the commentary says that this 'obhāsa' or light is the 'parikamma obhāsa' or the light generated in the initial stage of trance.

In this connection we would like to draw the attention of the reader to what we have already discussed about the Master's dictum that the mind is naturally brilliant. The relative suttas are the 9th and 10th of the 5th section in the Ekaka Nipāta and the lst and 2nd of the 6th section in the same Nipāta of the *Anguttara-nikāya*. The substance o f these four suttas is that the mind is naturally brilliant, and it is defiled with or released from the incoming defilements. Well-informed persons know the fact, it is said, while others do not know it. If these short suttas are not an excerpt from some longer sutta, the context of which is lost even in the commentary, such a pronouncement from the Master is either worth exploration, or enigmatic for it savours of dogmatism.

The commentary is still more confusing than the text. The

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commentator understands that the naturally brilliant mind is the 'bhavaṅga citta', or the passive mind unconsciously flowing from the first moment of foetal life, throughout the life-span, to the last moment of death. The defilement arises during the mental course of 'javana' in uninformed persons, he says, while it does not do so in well-informed persons. The commentator appears to be groping in the dark in search of a type of mind corresponding to the naturally brilliant one. He found none. So he supplied the little-understood 'bhavaṇga citta or passive mind. The flow of this passive mind is unconsciously experienced in a dreamless sleep.

The meditative light is also hinted at in the Bhaya-Bherava sutta, the fourth one of the *Majjhima-nikāya.* The Master was then staying in Sāvatthi and speaking to Jāṇussoni, a Brāhmaṇa priest in the employment of the King of Kosala. The topic of discourse was the fear and terror surrounding a meditationist in a lonely place. The Master related to the priest his own experience of such places and his controlling of such fears and terrors, before his enlightenment.

He said: "There are indeed, O Brāhmaṇa, some monks and Brāhmaṇas, who perceive the night as the time of daylight or daytime, and the day as night-time. I take this meditation of theirs for that of delusion, and I say so." As a contrast to such a deluded meditation, the Master explained that he knew the night, when it was the night, and the day, when it was the day. Then the concluded saying that, if there was ever born a man beyond delusion, it would be he himself that would be the man, to speak truly and properly.

The commentary rightly takes this hint as that of the phenomenon of white kasiṇa organised in the case of the other monks and Brāhmaṇas referred to at the beginning of the above quotation. This kasiṇa gave the impression of daytime even at night. The blue one organised by those hermits or monks and Brāhmaṇas, on the other hand, caused the impression of night-time even during daytime. But the commentator says that the Master's pronouncement referred to his correct knowledge of physical day and night. Even if there be seven days' cloudiness and the moon and the sun be not seen, the commentator says

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that the division of the parts of day and night is clear to the Master.

The meditative light cannot be so cursorily dispensed with, as Buddhaghosa has done in the above commentaries. In the afore-mentioned Upakkilesa sutta the Master has taken special care to impress the three monks of his order with the importance of maintaining the light and merging it ultimately into the day and night. The sudden flash of such a light is unavoidable in meditation. It is the Master who has rightly evaluated it. The successive impediments to the phenomena disclose that the light and the form are generally witnessed together and should be done so. They are however liable to be witnessed separately also due to being attentive to each of them alone. Although the commentator has some other notion about the visualization of forms, he throws an elucidating light on the subject. Hence we shall deal with the commentatorial version below.

Commentatorial Version: Obhāsa

When the Master put the later question to those elders, he would have asked them about their attainment of the supramundane dhamma. The elders had however none of these. It was not proper therefore to ask them such a question. Hence the Master asks about the light of the parikamma.

But the question put to them by the Master was whether they had obtained the meditation favourable to the superhuman dhamma and the special visualization of proper noble knowledge. It was not for the parikamma obhāsa or the light of the initial trance.

The commentary explains the word 'obhāsa', or light, as the parikamma obhāsa, while the phrase 'dassanañ ca rūpānam', or visualization of forms by means of the divine eye. This omission of the characteristics of form, replacing it by supernormal sight, is and was one of the reasons why we said above that Buddhaghosa failed to define the form practically. He either keeps it from us, or shirks from disclosing it openly, on traditional grounds, or had no clear conception of it.

The elders answered that they witnessed, according to the commentary, the parikamma obhāsa, or the initial light, and

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the visualization of forms through the supernormal or divine eye. But both of these disappeared, they said. They did not discern the cause, due to which both of these phenomena disappeared, they added. Then the Master said to the elders that they should look for the cause of such disappearance.

Then in order to show that the Master himself had been in turmoil with these eleven impediments, he began the precept with his own experience before his enlightenment. The purpose of the Master in telling them his earlier experience was, according to the commentary, to encourage them in their endeavour. "O Anuruddha! why would these impediments not beset you? I was myself beset with these before." Such a disclosure of experience would certainly have been a great encouragement even now.

Doubt

The commentary explains the impediments, one by one, adding some remarks, traditional or of its own. The doubt arose thus. The great being, the Bodhisatto, followed the light through the supernormal or divine eye and witnessed diverse shapes and forms. Seeing these abnormal phenomena, doubt arose in his mind as to what they were. Doubt often arises regarding the content of meditation for various reasons. It is therefore a great impediment specially in the Buddhistic type of meditation, which does not fix any centre, inner or outer, for concentration.

For example, we may find a doubt arising on the flow of meditation itself in the shape of 'whether it is a right or wrong path'. Such a doubt will obviously break the flow. Another example is the appearance of form, we may off and on doubt if the form is of the nature of the form plane or that of the material plane. In the organisation of the first formless trance, we may feel a lurking doubt, if it is merely a concept of the sky. The Master's dictum is unequivocal that the doubt is the mental defect or defilement to be eradicated. It is not however a dogma of blind faith.

Due to the rising of doubt, the initial trance disappeared. The initial light also vanished, that is, the supernormal eye did not see the form. The commentary evidently overlooks the form

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phenomenon and passes on to a separate subject of the supernormal power concerning the divine eye. It can be easily seen that such vision comes about usually after the achievement of the fourth form trance. The elders were ostensibly trying to stabilize the light and the visualization of forms. The latter is the unmistakable sign of the form trance.

Non-thinking, Idleness, and Torpor

The commentary takes up the second impediment in the order and goes on explaining it. By seeing the shapes and form, doubt arises, the Bodhisatto thought. Hence he made up his mind to take nothing at all in the mind, whence the impediment of non-thinking arose, and the trance likewise vanished due to the absence of thinking. Such an absence would also loosen and then release the memory from operation.

This non-thinking again produced mental idleness and bodily torpor. An arhat will have nothing of these natural conditions we are often subject to. Apart from the little-known mental and physical behaviour of a liberated one, we should expect that a habitual meditationist would never be mentally idle and physically indolent or sleepy. The principal elder, Moggallāna was once detected in it and reprimanded for sleepiness by the Master before his achievement of arhatship. Such an impediment brought about the disappearance of the light and the form, the commentator says.

Giants and Pythons

Spreading and following the light towards the Snow mountain, the Bodhisatto saw the mythical giants, pythons, etc. Thereupon the state of astonishment produced stupefaction. The text has a nice simile in this connection, which clearly disproves the commentatorial supposition. The text relates that the stunning astonishment causes the breaking up of the trance. The break-up causes the disappearance of the light and the form. The simile of such a sensation is that of a person, travelling along the road on a dark night, who is stunned by the sudden flight of doves from both sides of the road. The hint of the simile is evidently the sudden appearance of the light and that of uncommon form phenomena. There is no suggestion in

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the text of any such expansion productive of the view of giants, pythons, etc. We are stunned at something abnormally unexpected. The sudden flash of light and immaterial form certainly does the trick of stunning us for a while. At its best, the commentator wants to bring home to us the vivid idea of stupefaction in our minds by terrifying mythological images.

Uppila

The deviation of the commentary from the text can be also marked in the 5th impediment, 'uppila', or the crushingly overwhelming joy and pleasure experienced in a form trance. The commentary says: "The terrifying objects seen by me do not appear, when they are looked at in a natural or ordinary manner. What is there to be feared in an unseen thing?" Thinking thus, there arose uppila to the Bodhisatto. But the text gives us an import of overwhelming joy and pleasure by an elucidating simile. The Master said: "O Anuruddhā! (It is) as a man searching for a treasure (who) should find at once five treasure-pots, on account of which the man be overwhelmed with crushing joy. So I felt a crushingly overwhelming joy and pleasure." This kind of joy and pleasure stems from the form trance, not from the cessation of imaginary fears and terrors, as the commentary would have us believe.

Weak Vigour

The commentary goes on to say that the Bodhisatto thought: 'Because I held the great vigour firmly, thereby this uppila of mine arose.' So he made the hold of vigour loose, and, by doing so, bodily idleness ensued. He again said to himself: 'By relaxing my efforts thus, I got bodily idleness. Now, when I again increased the efforts, there arose an exceedingly high degree of 'viriya' or vigour.' The commentary is here voicing the textual meaning literally. There is a simile given in the text meaning that the dove in the fist, or the grasp of both the hands, would die therein, if the man should hold the dove tightly. The implied meaning of the simile seems to be the practical exercise of the middle way in exerting vigour or efforts in the organisation of a trance. Too intensive efforts cannot be continued for long and a poise of well-balanced endeavour is needed in meditation.

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"By holding a grip of efforts too strong, such a thing (as this) occurred, therefore there arose a vigour of an exceedingly weak degree in me through loosening the grip soft." Such a thought of the Bodhisatto, according to the commentary, can be easily guessed in the textual simile as well. The simile is the flying away of the dove from the fist, if the man should grip the dove too loosely. It is quite plain that the efforts should never be too little or too soft in meditation. The middle way between the extremes of efforts will have to be found and exercised anyhow. There are a number of suttas advocating the middle way in meditation and insight.

Craving

The ninth impediment is a sort of craving or attachment that arises on the phenomena of heavenly beings and their abodes, so says the commentary. It happens, when the light is increased or developed and directed towards the community of heavenly beings, and they are witnessed. It is also a likely deviation from the text. For a form trance is itself full of joy and pleasure. It may generate too strong an improper liking for its content. The Master has always warned us against such a liking being entertained towards anything whatsoever. By a gradual passage of time, the Master found that all his disciples were not much inclined to organise the gradual trances. They were attracted towards a short-cut to an insight of liberation.

Liberation was and is certainly the aim and purpose of organising all sorts of trances. The Buddha knew this and more than this verity. The learned disciples were also rather lukewarm towards laborious discipline and requirements for the organisation and maintenance of the basic trances. They wondered if the latter were superfluous to all intents and purposes to the Buddhistic conception of liberation. Hence the Master had to devise new devices of quick achievement in insight. He did so. The Assaji Sutta, the 88th of the 22nd, or *Khandha Samyutta*, is a notable example. The substance of this sutta is as follows.

Samadhi versus Insight

The Master was staying once in a certain resort in the city

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of Rājagaha. The Reverend Assaji was in another monastery, suffering from severe illness. He was asked by the Master whether he had anything doubtful and repentable. The answer to such direct questions is typically suggestive of the general practice. We generally experience vicissitudes in our meditative life. Sometimes we get on excellently well with our meditation. We are then elated and think our efforts to be successful. Sometimes we are unable to organise any trance and consequently feel depressed. This is due to several reasons described in several discourses by the Master. This is one of the principal reasons why a teacher of meditation always tries to acquaint the disciples with a small amount of the philosophy, which the teacher might be following in any way.

The monk replied: "In earlier times, Reverend Sir, I used to meditate smoothly by calming and overcoming an illness. But now (because I cannot do so) I do not obtain a trance. To me, Reverend Sir, who do not get a samādhi, the thought comes up, lest I should fall down (from the achievement I have already attained)." Such a weakness of mind in the elder is certainly very strange. Once a lay disciple and relative of the Master, Mahānāma, also expressed some similar anxiety to the Master. The answer to Assaji is very significant in Buddhism for us to remember. Samādhi is not strictly necessary for obtaining a real insight of Buddhistic liberation. There are several systems inside as well as outside the Buddhistic religion that regard the 'freedom from bondage' as obtainable by means of mental deliberation alone. Samādhi for such systems is only a secondary means of purifying one's mind.

But the Supra mundane Mind chapter of the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka states, in the section dealing with the first path, that the first form trance is to be obtained, when one organises the supra-mundane trance. The difference between the ordinary trance and the supra-mundane trance is that of attachment in the former and non-attachment in the latter; it is dogmatic orientation in the former and Nibbānic orientation in the latter; it is a craving for existence in the former and maintaining an indifferent, non-egoistic, non-dogmatic, and proper poise in the latter; it is also, although apparently existing, a fundamentally or mentally non-existing life-continuum, as long

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as it may last, in the latter. It is plainly conceivable that a state of such profound significance may scarcely be attained through mental deliberation alone. In such a state of maturity the ordinary mental layer will have already been transcended and the extraordinary or supramundane layer of mind established.

In other oriental systems of philosophy claiming the unshakable conviction of eternal liberation, such a mental state is always thought of as a transcendental one above all the ordinary and extraordinary ones. It is clear that such a unique state may never be attained without the organisation of a trance. In any case we shall have to organise a meditation of some depth and stability. The form trance capable of reaching the formless state was seemingly the best way to the summum bonum of those ancient times and is so even in our differently oriented modern times. Only the phraseology of the former will have to be changed or adjusted to suit our tastes, aspirations, and standards of judgement and evaluation. The Master's discourse on the Fruits of Renunciated Life, the 2nd sutta of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, can in this connection be fruitfully compared to that on the Division of Elements, the 140th sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. The listeners on both occasions were royal persons, one reigning in Magadha and the other an ex-ruler, probably of the Pukkusāti name and caste, and of a far-off (Takkasila) country. But the mood, manner, and grandeur of imparting the teaching are quite different in the two cases, with different results of the teaching on the listeners.

Hence the Master, to resume the story of Assaji, rightly assured the elder that the dependence upon samādhi or trance was applicable to the monks and Brāhmaṇas who depend upon it. If they do not obtain it, they fear they may fall. In his case, the Master recited the simile of the burning lamp being extinguished on the exhaustion of the fuel. Similar is the case of the monk who is constantly aware of the feelings felt throughout the body and the life-span and so knows the latter. Then he will have all his feelings extinct, through their non-acceptance, after the destruction of the body and the using up of the life-force. Although the Master apparently deprecated the dependence entirely upon samādhi or trance, the mention of the constant observation of feelings in the context is indicative of the organi-

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sation of trance. For observations require constant memory; the continuance of memory constitutes a virtually initial flow of contemplation and concentration. Thus the organisation of trance, by means of other important devices, was restored by the Master to his own system of meditation.

Similarity and Dissimilarity in Meditation and Insight

In the Master's system of meditation and insight, there is seemingly no great difference. Both these terms, 'samatha', or the calming of the mind, that is, meditation, and 'vipassanā', or mental deliberation through penetrating the fundamental substratum of all matters, phenomena, and concepts, are equally held in high esteem for the purpose of gaining knowledge and liberation. The cause of the superiority of the one over the other for the supramundane achievement is the difference of the faculty, so says the Master. Meditation needs a number of preliminaries to be fulfilled, several practices to be carefully conducted, and some indulgences to be totally stopped and discarded. Deliberation for insight does not exact such rules of conduct and manners of operation from us. We can understand tolerably well what we are about. In meditation, on the other hand, we cannot deliberate through mental speaking within the mind. The least deliberation may divert our attention from the meditative field we might be approaching or staying in. But insight needs at least a little deliberation, inasmuch as the language we employ in deliberation is finer, clearer, and subtler than the wordless mental sentiment, disposition, and even conception. Nevertheless, the approach is similar in both efforts.

The process of meditation is comparatively slower but steadier than that of deliberation for gaining insight, while the latter is quicker but more introspective than the former. The former is often accompanied with joy and pleasure, while the latter frequently has a neutral feeling. The concentration of the mind in the former is necessarily profound, whereas in the latter the mind is naturally engaged in investing and trying to discover the fundamental laws of the dhammas expounded in the Abhidhamma, or, in the case of others, treated of in the specific systems of philosophy they belong to. The purpose of practising them will however be similar in the former and the latter.

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The meditative nature of the Buddhistic process of gaining insight will be patently disclosed by the common reference to the impediments specified in the way to their successful termination. The impediments or hindrances to meditation are generally stated to be five 'nīvaraṇas', viz., sensual tendency, irritability, mental and bodily idleness, instability and confusion through improper penitence, and doubt. These five hindrances are often mentioned in connection with the first form trance. But the actual hindrances or impediments seem to be the eleven 'upakkilesa', nine of which have been fully treated of under the section entitled Commentatorial Version above. The remaining two impediments viz., diversified perception, and too much concentration, will be dealt with later on. Because of the Bodhisatto's own experience of these impediments, they are very important and should be closely studied by every one of us who aspires to attain even an initial stage of gradual trances in the Master's system of meditation. The failure of great personages may be a source of encouragement to us.

The obhāsa, or meditative light, has been treated of above. Buddhaghosa has not clearly stated, as in Insight, whether this light is herein also an impediment to trance or not. He could not ostensibly negate its essential role in a form trance. But in a formless trance we should not expect such a light overflooding the two limitless expanses of space and consciousness even. We have indeed to remove the white kasiṇa, the flame kasiṇa, and the āloka kasiṇa in their counterpart image stage, for organising the formless trance, according to his stipulation in the *Visuddhimagga*. These three kasiṇas apparently bear a sort of resemblance of the light under discussion. But it is not so in reality. We may later on deal with its meditative aspect. As he has overlooked or passed over the nature of the form trance, so he has done away with the real significance of this light. The reason seems to be an apathetic disposition of our savant, when and where a basic trance not linked with Buddhistic dogmas is concerned. We cannot however do so, inasmuch as we have undertaken to search for a nucleus, around which the Buddha's system of meditation grew, developed, and was gradually transformed into the shape of early Buddhism.

In all fairness to Buddhaghosa, he has given us an excellent

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description of this obhāsa in the 20th chapter of the *Visudhi-magga* on the 'Purification of the Penetrating Knowledge in the Right Path and the Wrong Path'. It is included in the ten impediments to the insight. They are obhāsa or light, knowledge, joy, composure, pleasure, delightful inclination, vigour, memory, neutral poise, and desire. Most of these are also experienced in organising and maintaining a trance. However, they are not regarded as impediments to samādhi or trance. They indicate a particular state or stage of trance. But in the case of an insight, each of them, if erroneously thought of, is an impediment to real insight. So a number of meditative phenomena are also observable in the Buddhistic method of thinking to gain an insight. In other systems of philosophy, a keen thinking, continued for some duration of time, exhibits a series of supernormal phenomena as well. Thus these phenomena are similar in both meditation and insight.

Now we shall give here a glimpse of Buddhaghosa's interpretation of the light termed by him as the 'light of insight.' Quoting a certain authority, he writes: "It is said,...when one deliberates over the nature of impermanence, there arises the obhāsa or light." The practiser regards the light as the dhamma, or religious verity and adverts to the phenomenon as such. Thereby he gets mental disturbance and unstability. "Possessed by such an unstabilized mind, one does not recognise the rising phenomenon as impermanence, as it should really be..." It is often so in the case of unwary beginners. The obhāsa suddenly appearing in a deep and keen deliberation may lead one to a wrong conclusion. Buddhaghosa writes: "When it (the light) rises, the Yogāvacara (practiser of yoga or meditation) may think like this: 'Oh! not (ever) to me before this (before now) such a light has arisen. Surely I have achieved the path (of the supramundane category) and the fruit (the stabilized result of the path).' Thus he takes up the wrong path as the right one, and the mistaken fruit as the correct one. Thereby the process of the insight gets normally (categorically) diverted. Renouncing the main kammaṭṭhāna (or object for practice) thus, he sits down (keeps on) tasting the light only."

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Description of Light

Buddhaghosa further goes on describing the light profusely. For, he says: "This obhāsa (light) verily arises illuminating the space occupied by the sitting posture of some Bhikkhu (or monk); it arises illuminating the inner space of the cell of some Bikkhu; it arises illuminating the outer side of the cell as well, of someone; it does so with the entire monastery of someone; it is so as far as a quarter of a yojana (about four and a half miles), half a yojana, one yojana, two yojanas, or three yojanas. Someone's obhāsa arises illuminating the regions from the surface of the earth (through six heavenly spheres, ten Brahmalokas akin to four form-trances, one unique habitation of beings with the cessation of consciousness (only), and four pure-lands of Suddhāvāsa), to the 15th (or the ultimate or highest) Brahmaloka; the obhāsa makes all these regions one single region. The Master's obhāsa however arose illuminating the ten thousand lokadhātus (cosmic worlds including hell, earth, heaven, and Brahmalokas)." The 'ten thousand' means the product of a thousand multiplied by itself ten times.

We cannot evaluate such an extravagant description in a way compatible with our modern sense of proportion, possibility, and factuality. As a matter of fact, observable in the text, specially in the aforesaid Upakkilesa Sutta, the Master has said to Anuruddha and others that he, as a Bodhisatto, experienced this obhāsa of an immeasurable magnitude. After the eradication of the eleven impediments, he was able to experience the light and the form separately, a limited magnitude of light and form, and also an unlimited one of both of them. It appears from a number of suttas that a mental state, either in trance or contemplation, becomes unlimited, if it is not obstructed by any sensuous or perceptible objects. Similarly, the mental state becomes immeasurable, if it spreads without meeting an obstruction.

For example, in the contemplation of each of the four Brahma-vihāras, it becomes immeasurable, only when it spreads over every being and everywhere, without making any exception or discrimination whatsoever. Again, in the organisation of trance, it is limited by the diversification of perception. It is also limited, if one is concentrating too much on a single object. If

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one is gradually receding inwards in the organisation of a form-trance, the visible objects will be at first seen as a pattern of those objects; they will then be seen gradually as a sort of palpable pattern of mere forms separated from their material prototypes. This is the form-trance to be measured by the presence or the absence of the five principal factors, viz., vitakka, vicāra, joy, pleasure, and neutral poise. If any one of the first four factors intervenes in a trance, it will be limited by that factor. The fifth factor, neutral poise, is however common to the fourth form-trance and the four formless trances as well.

Any appearance of form will limit the formless trance to the extent of the form occupying the space, the consciousness, the nothingness, or the rarefied consciousness bordering unconsciousness, as the support of the formless trance may be. The trance assumes an unlimited expanse, if nothing intervenes into it through appearance. Any one of us can easily conceive the concept of these four phenomena. But the concept is not a trance. To become a trance, the concept will have to be stabilized and conceptualized as clearly as we visualize things in vivid imagination, or in passive but natural dreams. The Master has often spoken of the three fundamental causes or roots of bondage, viz., desire, enmity, and ignorance or delusion, as the limiting agents either of meditation or insight. They may appear however to us, even at present, under modern circumstances; but they may seem not so totally unlikable as to be completely discarded or uprooted. But the Master's precept is unequivocally definite about the undesirability of these three roots.

Supernormal Powers

Buddhaghosa has given us a few instances of the utilization of this obhāsa from the tradition of later times. As such things come under the subject of supernormal powers, we shall have to deal with them only in a later phase, as proposed by us. Such supernormal powers are plentifully given in the Canonical texts. We shall treat of them in some sort of systematic way and try to find out some clues. For there must have been some effective ways probably of organising these power-generating trances, so profusely illustrated in the semi-mythical stories of world scriptures and literature. But the Buddhistic way of

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depicting these stories may be profitable for us in their meaningful study and research. We shall have to study thoroughly even these stories, which may disclose some secret practices capable of producing such powers in their initial and middle stages, if not any further. Even if we take all the records concerning these powers for the phenomena in the mental or psychic field, some remarkable phenomena must have occurred in the material plane as well. Materialization and externalization of psychic powers and trances cannot possibly be denied, even now in our modern material world. Hence the oft-repeated phrases, such as iddhi-vidha or supernormal powers, of the Master cannot be cursorily dispensed with so easily as we are wont to do.

The very nature of the basic trances of both the form and the formless categories would show that the supernormal powers must have been latent in them. We have actually an instance of this "iddhi", ("riddhi" in Sanskrit), being developed out of the practice of the first form trance. It is said to be found in the Tibetan Buddhistic works *Bkah-hgyur* and *Bstan-hgyur*, or cannonical text and non-canonical commentary, as derived and translated by W.W. Rockhill.[1] The relevant passages are as follows:

Devadatta's Acquirement of Iddhi

"We have seen that Devadatta and quite a number of Shākyas had been made to enter the Order much against their will, when the Buddha visited Kapilavastu in the sixth year of his ministry. Devadatta was the leader of this dissatisfied portion of the fraternity." There are several references to Devadatta in Pāli and mixed Sanskrit canonical and non-canonical works. It appears that the enmity of Devadatta towards the Master was not premeditated, as these sources would have us believe. Otherwise, Devadatta could not have been praised openly by Sāriputta before his secession from the Order of Monks. Once again, Devadatta was rather firmly supported by Sāriputta against the wrong report of his preaching on the declaration of arhatship. The reporter was a monk, named Candikā-putta, in Rājagaha, as found in the Silāyūpa sutta of the nine-item Nipāta of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. Moreover, Anuruddha was also of the group of the Shākya youths, who were made to enter the order along

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with Devadatta. Hence we cannot conclude that there existed any such dissatisfied group of Shākya youths under his leadership before the Schism.

To resume the relevant passages from the work of W.W. Rockhill, "there was a dire famine," when "the Blessed One was stopping at Rājagriha." A similar account of this famine and his plan of availing himself of the opportunity through the 'iddhi' power are fully dealt with in the Pāli text and commentary, as well as in the Mahāvastu-avadāna. But the Tibetan version given in the above-mentioned work is remarkable for the mentioning of the first form trance, as the stepping stone for iddhi organisation. He first went to the Blessed One and requested him "to teach him (Devadatta) magic". The Blessed One declined to do so but, instead of such magic, advised him to strive for the right path. Then he went to other renowned monks such as Adjnata (Ājnāta), Kaudinya, Aśhwadjit (Asvajit), Bhadrika, etc., for the same purpose, but he got a similar answer and advice from them. Then he went to 'Dashabala Kāshyapa' (Mahākassapa), thinking that, as he was the master of his elder brother, Ānanda, he could teach him (Devadatta) the way to acquire magical powers.

The Master had declared the elder Kassapa to be capable of organising and maintaining all the gradual trances, supernormal powers, and also supramundane insight as much as the Master himself. This is recorded in the ninth sutta of the 16th Samyutta in the Nidāna or 2nd section of the *Samyutta-nikāya*. As the Master was known as 'Dashabala', so this elder appears to have acquired the epithet eulogistically. But he is generally known as Mahākassapa.

"Kāshyapa taught him (Devadatta) the way; then Devadatta kept from sleeping during the night, and having reached the first stage of dhyāna (jhāna in Pāli), he acquired the irrdhi (riddhi in Sanskrit, iddhi in Pāli) of the way of the world." The latter phrase means that the supernormal powers he acquired were of the non-Buddhistic type and not helpful for gaining an insight into liberation.

"So he became able, from being one, to multiply himself; and, having multiplied himself, he could become one again. With the eye of wisdom he could make himself visible or

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invisible..." This and the following passages are alike in phraseology, as we often meet with the iddhi-vidha, for example, the relative section in the second sutta of the *Dīgha-nikāya*. The quotation was given here to show that even the first stage of the form trance was productive of such supernormal powers. The oft-repeated procedure of developing these powers is however given after the stabilization of the fourth form-trance. Buddhaghosa, in the 12th or Iddhi-Vidha chapter of the *Visuddhi-magga*, takes up the general procedure for organising these powers. But he does so in a much more elaborate manner than we ever come across in any one of the relative suttas in the first four Nikāyas. Since we are going to investigate this interesting subject in the later phases of this research, this much will be sufficient to show that the subject deserves careful treatment, which we propose to accomplish, as far as the available text and commentary allow, in the next phase.

NOTE

[1]W.W. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 83 to 89.

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XX

Uniformity of Method

A Thesis on Method

THE DISCOVERY of method for organising trances basic or applied, uni-purposive or multi-purposive, of the pre-enlightenment or post-enlightenment period, by the Shākya Prince Siddhārtha, the Bodhisattva, and the Buddha, displays a remarkable uniformity of method. It is also observable in almost all of his precepts and teachings on the ways of conducting and achieving meditative objectives. He had declared and claimed in many suttas that the discoverer of the ways was none other than he himself. In all the suttas of an autobiographical nature beginning with such phrases as "Pubbeva me sambodhā; Aham pi sudam; Abhi-jānāmi kho panāham; Āraddhan kho pana me...", meaning—'surely before my enlightenment; I also verily; I do truly remember; I had indeed commenced my...'—respectively, the Master discloses a wonderful uniformity of procedure in organising his mental activity towards the objective he is bent upon achieving.

His sitting posture is always the same, as the short sentence often repeated indicates. It is the seat formed with both the legs crossed and placed most probably over the thighs. The legs might have been placed under the thighs as well, or one leg above and the other leg under the thighs of the opposite sides. The body is held up straight at ease. The memory, awareness,

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or consciousness is directed or kept up all around the face or in front. Such a posture had become a habitual one with him, when he was well seated. So he always advised his disciples to practise the kammaṭṭhāna in such a sitting posture. The uniformity of the physical position with an alert memory is certainly wonderful in him.

Meditation could be and was also conducted while standing up, walking to and fro within a short space or strip of land, or lying down on the right side with one (left) leg upon the other. The Master kept up this practice to the end and encouraged his disciples to copy it, if they could. Although he was a hard rider and drove in a chariot, while he was a prince, he is never reported to have used any conveyance after he became an ascetic. He is not known to have run on foot even once. His steps were rather quick, as we learn from a few suttas. As he never ran, so he never jumped. We do not know if he ever swam in a river or pond. From his precept on sleeping, we learn that he slept soundly with an alert disposition, but never longer than the third part or watch of the night, that is, four hours. He always kept awake late at night and woke up and walked outside early in the morning. Such a uniform habit was doubtless an indication of his mental equanimity and poise.

After the sojourn during the rainy season, when he started on his usual long journey during other seasons, none could ever stop or recall him. He never gave a boon to anybody whomsoever without a proper reason nor punished anyone with a curse. Even his denouncements made on certain persons and occasions never amounted to revenge. He did not lose his temper even under great provocation. It is a rare quality always found among supermen with supernormal powers. He had two great enemies, the paradoxical Māra and the ambitious Shākya, Devadatta. The former was sometimes probably the personification of his own, so to say, undesirable tendencies. The latter was a member of his arrogant Shākya clan enraged at and frustrated by his (the Master's) own undiplomatic refusal of a diplomatic request from that powerful disciple. Both of them were however left to their own fate, uncursed and unpunished by the Master.

He never gave a false hope of liberation through means other than those of meditation and insight. Even to his most favourite

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attendant monk, Ānanda, his last exhortation at his death-bed was "You are a merit-earned one, Ānanda; be engaged in vigorous exercise; you will soon be free from the underlying defilement to arhatship." To the Order of Monks, his last precept was in a similar tone of exhortation with emphasis on insight-cum-meditation. He said: "Well now, O Monks, I address you: Subject to dissolution are all things, try for achievement without negligence." Such a teaching at the last critical moment of the Master unequivocally points to a joint need. It is the need of a strenuous life of meditation and insight, to be uniformly conducted throughout one's entire life-span, from the first moment of awakening to the last one of cessation.

The discoverer of so many trances, concentrations, and absorptions cannot be conceived to be wandering over as many different devices. The method must have been natural, fundamental, and easy to organise and operate upon. Hence we find the uniformity of organising trances, surmounting obstacles, transcending the successive stages, attaining the higher and subtler ones, and maintaining them as long as one desires, or one has to do so. The discoverer of trances was thus the discoverer of their methods as well.

Suttas in Evidence

In the *Samyutta-nikāya,* among others, we have a number of suttas, which describe the main types of trances. They are said to be discovered by the Bodhisatto before his enlightenment, and, by the Buddha, just after his enlightenment as well. The Iddhi-pāda, the 51st, Samyutta of this Nikāya, contains, to quote one of them, a discourse named the Pubba-sutta, the 11th. Herein the Master said to the monks that he investigated the principles of contemplating the iddhi-pāda before his enlightenment, and discovered their four factors, viz., desire, vigour, mind, and discrimination, with their modes of operation. The same thing has been said in the Magga Sutta, the 21st of this very *Samyutta,* while the preceding one, the 20th, the Vibhanga Sutta, is given, as a precept of the Master, with fuller details regarding the mode of operation.

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Physico-psychic Phenomena

The succeeding sutta, the 22nd, of this *Samyutta* is seemingly placed here to show the efficacy of these four contemplations. This discourse, "Ayogula Sutta" or the simile of an iron ball, is remarkable for a wonderful supernormal power as well. The attendant monk, Ānanda, asked the Master, if he remembered having visited Brahmaloka through iddhi, or supernormal power, by means of the mental body. The Master replied to him that he did so. Then Ānanda put another question to the Master, asking if he remembered having done so by means of the physical body formed out of the four material elements. The answer was in the affirmative. The mode of operation was explained to the disciple. "It is brought about," the Master explains, "when the Tathāgata (he refers to himself) combines the body with the mind and the mind with the body. Then his body becomes lighter, softer, more supple, and more brilliant, as an iron-ball heated in daytime," in the former case. In the latter case, the simile of cotton-wool or an appliance of air is given, so that 'the body similarly rises with little trouble from the earth into the sky'.

The Saham pati Brahmā Sutta, the 57th of the Indriya, or faculty, Samyutta, records that the Master, just after the enlightenment, discovered the five faculties, viz., faith, vigour, memory, trance, and intellect, inducive to the state of deathlessness. The discovery was greeted with acclamation by Sahampati Brahmā. A similar phenomenon occurred when the Master discovered, just after his enlightenment, the four Sati-paṭṭhānas; it is recorded in the Brahmā Sutta, the 18th of the *Sati-paṭṭhāna Samyutta.* In the *Magga Sutta*, the 43rd of the same *Samyutta,* we find a similar account of the discovery. Each of the four Sati-paṭṭhānas is separately described as singularly discovered by the Master; the event was seemingly just before the enlightenment; the sutta is the 31st of the same *Samyutta.*

The Pubba Sutta and Nanā Sutta, the 24th and 25th of the *Vedanā Samyutta*, are important, inasmuch as the discovery of the feeling is described herein in the same manner as in the above-mentioned 31st sutta. These two suttas must draw our attention to the important role of feeling in most of the trances. Similarly, each of the four noble truths is stated in the famous

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'Dhamma-cakka-ppavatthana' Sutta and the Tathāgata Sutta, the 11th and 12th of the *Sacca Samyutta*. In the same manner, in the 23rd sutta, "Sammā-Sambuddha Sutta", the Master declares that, by factually and perfectly knowing these four noble truths, the Tathāgata (the Buddha) is called "Araham Sammā-Sambuddha", the liberated perfectly enlightened one. These few instances will be enough to show that our thesis stands on textual grounds. They show that the Master must have employed a uniform method in almost all his discoveries of trances and their methods and applications for purposes partly known to us.

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XXI

The Rest of the Formless Trances

Procedure

WE HAVE already seen, in the first phase of this research, that the general procedure followed by our savants was to deal with the Earth Kasiṇa extensively for the manifestation of the first form trance. And then the erudite savants cursorily treated of the rest of the kasiṇas. Similarly, they quickly ran over the rest of the form trances, after explaining the first form trance. It was It not unreasonable to do this, for the text is stereotyped in its formula for the organisation of the four form trances.

In the formless trances also, the same or a similar procedure has been adopted by our authorities. The text is still much more stereotyped in the organisation of the formless than that of the form trances. The reason appears to be a sort of reticence on the part of adept disciples, who might have thought it inadvisable or inexpedient to acquaint the novice or proselyte with the requisite device. We find several instances thereof in the text and the commentary. Although not found in Pāli literature in such specific detail, the case of 'Devadatta's acquirement of iddhi', or supernormal powers, given above from the Tibetan source, is worth consideration. He was desirous of learning the method of acquiring supernormal powers for purposes other than moral insight into liberation. He approached the Master and several principal monks with the request; but he was flatly

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refused and advised to strive for the right path. It was only the elder Mahākassapa who taught him the device.

Another instance is found in the case of a dissatisfied ex-monk named Sunakkhatta Licchavi-putta. The account is given in the Mahāli Sutta and Pāthika Sutta of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, and the Mahā-sīhanāda Sutta of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. His dissatisfaction was mainly concerned with his inability to develop supernormal hearing.[1] He thought that the Master did not teach him the device. The commentary says here that it was not taught him because of his particular past evil action.[2] He was seemingly quite an influential person in Vesāli. We have already shown, in the first phase, that Buddhaghosa too has not disclosed, knowingly or unknowingly, the nature of form trance.

Nevertheless we have tried our best to explain the nature of form trance in the first phase, and that of the formless one in this phase. In spite of the problematic Buddhistic psychological sophistication concerning the non-overlapping of mental or meditative processes, we can see no possible reason why the first form trance should not reach the fourth stage through the uniform method described above. In a similar manner the first formless trance, if properly organised and maintained, cannot fail to lead us gradually to the fourth stage, provided we keep close to the uniform method.

The First Stage in Formlessness

The nature of form looms up, appears, manifests itself, and is clearly differentiated from the material visible objects presented to the eyes, as fully described in the preceding phase. Similarly, the first stage in formlessness must loom up and appear before the eyes as a sky devoid of forms. The method has been already dealt with above. In short, it is to withdraw our attention inward from the form seen outside. Such a withdrawal is doubtless very difficult, especially when the form is the pattern of the trance, which is itself full of joy and pleasure and later on also of equanimity. But once the absence of forms is marked, detected, and recognised, the attraction of formless equanimity cannot fail to draw us inward.

Hence this first stage is textually recorded as "Totally transcending the perception of forms, the visible obstruction

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being set aside or made to vanish, not thinking over any diversified form perception or conception, one organises and dwells in it (thinking only so much) as limitless is the sky." Although the text is cryptic, the concept of the spatial expanse is clear and not difficult to comprehend. But it is a real state of mental equanimity and concentration, and not merely an intellectual concept or imagination. The respiration and the body will have likewise rarefied and will not be felt. The mental speech and thought will remain suspended. But the memory, subtle feeling and appropriate concomitants will go on fluctuating. The trance is active, never passive.

The Second Stage in Formlessness

The first stage is spatial. So we can conceive it easily with reference to the open or limited sky. But the trance is mental, not physical, nor material. Even if the conception of the sky is manifest in the material plane, the trance organised on the spatial support is virtually a mental state of psychic content. The formless spatial experience appears to be outer or external, only because of our habit of thinking in material terms. Actually the form and formless experience in meditation are a psychic phenomenon. As such we can cross over the spatial concept and recognise it as an expanse of mere perception or consciousness. This stage leads us to the sphere of limitless consciousness.

The text is brief but clear. It is: "Totally transcending the perception of the sphere of the limitless sky, one organises and dwells in it (thinking as much) as limitless as consciousness (of the mind)." Here the conception will be inward or inner. The method of uniformity will require that we are to withdraw our attention inward from the expanse before our mental sight. Once we are aware of the inner nature of the mind, the concept of the outer space will quickly vanish. It is not through any metaphysical dogmatism, philosophical idealism, or blind acceptance. We are only experiencing a mental state of the second category of formlessness. It is also active, and not passive. It is devoid of form and its concept.

The Third Stage in Formlessness

This third stage in formlessness was popular, to all appea-

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rances, in those early times. It has maintained its popularity among serious meditationists ever since. The reason seems to be its comparatively easier comprehensibility and, to some extent, organisation. In fact, all sorts of meditation may end in such a state, provided the different tenets held in other systems are suspended or discarded before organising it. The concept of the first stage of spatial expanse may meditatively and also logically lead to this third stage of nothingness. It is however not to be confused with the metaphysical, philosophical or dogmatic concept of emptiness, or voidness. For it is a state of meditative realisation of nothingness.

The Buddhistic text is as short and cryptic as in the preceding and the succeeding stages of formless trance. It is: "Totally transcending the sphere of limitless consciousness, one organises and dwells in it, (thinking) as nothing is there." The uniform method of withdrawing our attention from the expanse of conscious phenomena will invariably lead us to the realm of nothingness. The outward conception is transcended by withdrawing from the first stage of spatial expanse. The inward conception is passed over by receding from the second stage of conscious expansion. Then there will be nothing left to perceive or to conceive. It is the sphere of nothingness.

The Fourth Stage in Formlessness

The fourth stage of formless trance is said to be a state in which the mental consciousness does not function, as it does in the lower states of the mind. So it is partly termed "neva saññā", literally meaning—not even perception or (better to say) consciousness. But excepting the cessation of consciousness, and the cessation of consciousness and feeling, we must expect the presence of consciousness in all the mental states. Hence the above term does not mean unconsciousness; none of the active trances can be unconscious; the loss of consciousness will result in the sort of state obtaining in dreamless sleep.

Accordingly, it is conclusively and emphatically termed "na-asaññā", or "not non-consciousness". It is definitely meant to convey the idea of the presence of consciousness. Both these terms mean the same thing from two opposite angles of vision. The text will present no difficulty now. It is: "Totally

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transcending the sphere of nothingness, one organises and dwells in the sphere of neither consciousness nor non-consciousness." The text is what we find in the four Sutta Nikāyas. The Jhāna Vibhaṅga adds however a phrase meaning 'residual mental formations' to this trance. It is evidently a later interpolation. We can only deal with such topics in the next phase.

The concept of this trance is the least understood of the formless trances. It is however seemingly not very unlike the second formless trance of limitless consciousness. But the Master has found that it is best obtained by withdrawing the attention from the third formless trance of nothingness. The uniform method of withdrawing one's attention from the preceding support in the formless trance is a sure guide to enter the succeeding stage of formless. This trance, together with other formless trances, needs a critical study, which we propose to conduct in one of the phases of this research.

Moreover, the practice of formless trances is, to all appearances, necessary for several types of supernormal powers. Since we are to deal with the topics of organising supernormal powers and knowledges in the next and subsequent phases, we shall have to conduct later on a critical study of these four formless trances. Such a study will be helpful to organise these trances on a practical basis. It is to be borne in mind that the field of meditation is best explored by means of practical experiments. Even a little experience and realisation of meditative phenomena will be of much help to a novice, amateur, or even a person of wide knowledge about the subject.

Conclusion

With great humility and profound deference, I refer to the conclusion of the first phase for my humble suggestions in conducting the study and practice of meditation. The experience and realisation obtained in meditation are never exhausted, since a new and fresh vista on life appears before us with each step forward on the path of meditation.

I should once more draw the attention of all lovers of yoga or meditation to a verse quoted in the commentary of Vyāsa on the *Yoga Sūtra*. It is given at the end of the comment on the 6th sūtra of the third part of the work. The verse is introduced

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thus: "This (which) state is the intervening state of that (which) state. Here, in such a case, yoga itself is the teacher (or the guide). How is it so? Thus is it said:

By means of the yoga, the yoga is knowable;
The yoga gets increased, through the yoga itself.
One (who is) not negligent of (practising)
the yoga, dwells in the yoga for long.

It is only Vijñāna Bhikṣu, the sub-commentator, who clarifies the import of this quotation. He says:

"Upādhyāyah (the teacher) means Guru (the preceptor). By the power of yoga itself, he (the practiser) himself knows it (the appropriate intervening state). This is the meaning. Here the evidence is asked (by the question) as to how it is so. The answer is given, as 'thus it is said'. The word 'apramattah' (not negligent) (in the verse) means not lustful in the Siddhis, the achievements of supernormal powers."

The Master has also often laid great emphasis on the practice of meditation and insight. It is said that he received his ordination under the Bodhi tree. It cannot be other than his achievement through these two main principles of practical Buddhism. As a matter of fact, the basic meditation, the first stage of which appeared to him beneath the shade of the rose-apple tree, was the real guide for his attainment of the applied meditation and supramundane insight.

The mention of innumerable samādhis or trances in the Mahāyāna scriptures should not dazzle our sight and sanity. These trances must have developed primarily from the basic ones and secondarily from the applied ones, with overgrowths stemming from the fertile imagination of erudite devotees of Buddhism. If we resolutely stick to the basic meditation of the form and formless categories, there is no reason why we should not be able to achieve some of the supernormal manifestations of applied meditation. The latter possibilities will be explored in the next and subsequent phases.

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[1]The two super normal powers of hearing and seeing have to be practised separately and then both jointly, as the Master has described in this discourse, 'the Mahali Sutta'.

[2]This past evil action of Sunakkhatta is given in a short passage in the commentary of this Mahali Sutta as follows: "Why does Sunakkhatta not hear those heavenly words (or sounds)? He is said to have approached the Master and asked him to explain the preliminary device of 'divine eye'. The Master explained it to him. He did as he was taught and produced the divine eye. Having seen the forms of deities, he thought: 'In this bodily shape there must be sweet sound. How am I to hear this?' So having approached the Master, he asked him to explain the preliminary device of 'divine ear'. In the past (previous life) he had caused deafness to a certain virtuous monk (Bhikkhu) by hitting him on the ear passage. Hence even if he should do the preliminary practice, he was unfit (abhabbo) to obtain the divine ear. It was the reason why the Master did not teach him the preliminary device (parikamma)."

The complex of past merit and demerit is apparently a great hurdle frequently met with in the oriental texts and commentaries on yoga and its achievements. This research has been trying to bypass this complex by disclosing the practical steps of a likely device collected piecemeal from the text and the commentary.

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Nigamanam

THE CONCLUDING story is termed "Nigamanam" in Pāli or Buddhist Sanskrit works. The concluding verses are however found in the commentatorial works in Sanskrit literature. They serve several purposes already mentioned at the end of the first phase. I have nothing more to add to it.

Likewise I have once more to draw the attention of the readers to what I have ventured to state under the sub-heading, "The Story of This Research Work" at the end.

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Bibliography

I HAVE already voiced my humble opinion and suggestion, in the first phase under the sub-heading "Simple Method". I find nothing more to add to it at present.

Under its sub-heading "Pāli Canon" in the same first phase, I have given the information I had and have access to. From the same source I have drawn materials needful for the topics and the thesis of this phase of the research. I have however given just enough references to trace out and find the desired portion easily. These references are arranged in a manner that makes the reading smooth and unhampered by the frequent need to look for the desired ones through the maze of abbreviations and footnotes.

In addition to the one hundred works listed with short elucidatory notes in the Bibliography given in the first phase of this research work, I give below a few works in addition consulted and referred to in this second phase.

Pāli Canon

1. Dīgha Nikāya, Pathamo Bhago, Bombay University Publication, Devanāgari-Pāli Text, No. 8. This work contains the first thirteen suttas, with a critical preface by Prof. N.K. Bhagawat. The work is useful. First Edition, 1942 A.D.
2. Majjhima Nikāyo, Suttas 51-70, Do. No. 5; First Edition, 1937 A.D.
3. Majjhima Nikāyo, the first 50 suttas. Script Bengali.

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Edited by Bikkhu Dhamma-piya, revised by Revs. Paññāloka and Anoma-dassi. 1935 A.D.; published by The Buddhist Mission (Rangoon?).

4. Dhamma-Saṅgaṇi, Bhandarkar Oriental Series No. 3. Script Devanāgari. First Edition, Poona, 1940.

Commentaries in Pāli

5. Sammoha-vinodani, the commentary to the Vibhaṅga (the second book) of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. Simon Hewavitarne Bequest vol. 34. Script Sinhalese, Colombo, 1932 A.D. Pp. 1-573.
6. Visuddhi-Magga, Do. Vol. 8. Script Sinhalese, Colombo, 1920 A.D. Pp. 1-544. Although this work is not a commentary on any Pāli text of the Sutta Piṭaka, each of the commentaries on Sutta and Abhidhammas refers to this work for details on the principal topics. The introductory verses of the commentaries advise us to keep the work in readiness for our comprehension thus: "Standing in the middle position of four Āgāmas, or Sutta Nikāyas, this Visuddhi-Magga will express the meaning of what is really said" (the 15th verse of the introduction to the commentary on Majjhima Nikāya.)
7. The Papañca Sūdani, the commentary of the Majjhima Nikāya, Aluvihara Edition. Revised and edited by Dhamma-kitti Siri Dhammārāma, under the patronage of the Right Honourable Sir Robert Chalmers . . . etc. The Royal Asiatic Society . . . etc. Colombo, 1917. Script Sinhalese; the commentary on the first fifty Suttas, pp. 1-564. It contains an introduction briefly describing the history of the Pāli Text, its writing, Sinhalese commentary, and Buddhaghosa's translation. The discussion about the two Māgadhi languages is very interesting.
8. The Niddesa (both the parts, Culla Niddesa & Mahā Niddesa) is helpful as an early commentary on the Sutta Nipāta. The work is however included in the 5th one of the Khuddaka Nikāya. The difference is however patent between the work and the usual commentary. This work deals only with the meaning of the textual words.

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Other Works on Yoga

9. Haṭha-yoga Pradīpikā; this Sanskrit work contains 389 verses divided into four parts, each termed "Upadesah" or precept. The author's name is Svātmārāma Yogindra. He traces the source of this system to Ādinātha in the opening verse of the first part. The commentator, Brahmānanda, has written a scholarly commentary on this work. The commentary consists of 2450 verses (in measure), according to the note set down at the end. The learned commentator supports the author's assertion of yogic trance over other higher knowledges, with remarkable erudition. He comes to the conclusion that there is no other way to achieve the highest goal than eightfold yoga.
   Published by and printed at the Press of "Lakshmi-Venkatesvara," Kalyan, Bombay. Shaka 1846 (1924 A.D.).
10. Saṭ-cakra-Nirūpaṇa Citram; this work is famous for a pictureseque description of sixt psychic centres and the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain. The verses are of considerable length, but they are only 56 in number. They are exquisite in poetic and mystic conception and imagination. The name of the author is given as the highly respected Svāmi Hansa-Svarūpa. There is also a commentary on these Sanskrit verses, perchance written by the author himself. The introduction written in Hindi is evidently from a certain disciple or admirer of the author. A Hindi translation is also added to each verse as its commentary. The usual rule of writing a book with requisite information has been disregarded or discarded in it. The author and the commentator are seemingly desirous of making themselves anonymous in their own composition. The attempt was however nullified by the devotee, who wrote the introduction to this work.

A bibiography is never complete or satisfactory. It must be especially so in a work like this. I shall try however to produce a practically useful one, when the research work reaches its final

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phase. What I have said before, under "Miscellany" in the first phase, holds good in this second phase as well.

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Ayodhya Prasad Pradhan (b. 1904) is a well-known Nepalese Buddhist scholar of Pali language, scripture, philosophy and literature. He has participated in several Buddhist seminars and conferences.

A practitioner of Hatha Yoga in his younger days and later of Laya Yoga, he came to discover the superiority of the Buddha's system of meditation over the other known systems and practised it.

Pradhan obtained his B.A. (Honours in Pali) from the Banaras Hindu University. He is an alumnus of the Nalanda Pali Institute and a gold-medallist M.A. (in Pali) of the Bihar University. He studied Education in America and got his Master's degree from the University of Maryland. He has visited Switzerland, France, Germany, and Australia.

After his retirement from service in His Majesty's Government of Nepal he worked as an adviser to it in the Ministry of Finance, as a specialist in the Department of Folklore in the Royal Academy of Nepal and as a specialist in compiling the *Encyclopaedia of Nepal* in the Nepalese language.

Pradhan has been conducting research on the Buddha's system of meditation at the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) in the Tribhuvan University since 1974. His published works include *Nepal ko Dharmik Sahisnut* (Religious tolerance of Nepal) and many articles on religion, folklore, dialects, Yoga, and literature.

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